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The Private and Corporate Economies

Proposal for a Constitutional Amendment

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THE federal Constitution was originally drawn not only to grant power to the national government, but strictly to reserve to the several states or to the people every authority not specifically entrusted to the federal government. The Constitution makes no mention at all of corporate organizations, perhaps because the use of these for the conduct of ordinary business was practically unknown to the America of the eighteenth century. The several states are therefore quite clearly within their competent authority in granting corporate charters and regulating corporate forms, and the national government is quite as evidently ill-equipped to create or control corporations except for strictly federal or inter-state functions. Yet, and by a most convenient legal fiction, both state and federal courts have assumed that the Constitution guarantees to corporate entities every appropriate legal and property right in which it protects the private citizen. This is a richly fertile assumption. Under its stimulus corporations have not only flourished and monopolized the most productive business fields within the states, but have made a veritable legal jungle of the no-man's-land that lies between states' rights and the intrenchments of the national authority. The extent and precise outlines of that territory have never been mapped or defined, and practically its only explorers have been corporation lawyers and criminals seeking refuge. Neither of these are primarily concerned with the public interest.

Corporations differ from natural persons in at least three essential particulars:

1. They are permanent, except as an occasional corporation is limited in its tenure of life by some special legislative grant or charter. On the other hand, the term of a natural person is limited by his expectation of life, and at his death his estate is divided among his heirs and further diminished by the taxation of inheritances.
2. Their responsibility is impersonal, and the responsibility of their organizers and owners is limited by statute or charter. The responsibility of the private individual for his acts and for his debts, however, is personal and unlimited, and extends from his person to his entire estate rather than to a particular form of liability or limited type of transaction.
3. Corporate management may in practice be entirely independent of its titular or actual ownership; but as to the property of private persons this is not ordinarily practicable for any considerable length of time.

In each of these respects corporations have become far more independent of natural law and more ruthless in their competition with private citizens than was ever contemplated in their original statutory authorizations, and they are much more difficult to restrain or control than would be the case if the operations of each were confined to the state which originally chartered it. By legal courtesy corporations are persons; by legislative sanction they may possess the control of property or services without specific accounting and independent of any personal responsibility; by business custom their managements may collectively accomplish corporate acts and corporate policies which any decent personal morality would reject as illegal or unfair.

Modern conditions have vastly multiplied the economic uses of corporations in business, and their number, complexity, and size make their impact upon individual fortunes and upon the social order too grave to be uncontrolled. Their restraint can no longer be safely entrusted to the same legal sanctions and to the same codes of ethics which may quite adequately control private enterprise and private persons.

II

The total usefulness of corporate forms seems to me to be overrated, and much of the efficiency of the large corporation is either illusory or highly questionable. Much of the supposed economy of large corporate operation can certainly be resolved into an anti-social manipulation of the fields within which they themselves function rather than into any demonstrated excellence of management within their own internal controls. The total advantages of the corporate organization are its permanence, the possibility of an indefinite expansion, the absence of personal responsibility on the part of its owners, flexibility in the sale, division, or aggregation of shares in the enterprise, and the possibility of long-term or semi-permanent control of credit. None of these is in itself conclusively inimical to society or to private enterprise, but each of them is a dangerous weapon for uncontrolled use in any competitive field. It is certain that many of the fields of American business are now entirely monopolized by corporations, and many others are rapidly being subjugated into corporate possessions or corporate spheres of influence.

When Standard Oil in its early days gained control of the petroleum industry through illegal and secret transportation rebates which enabled it to undersell competition and dictate exclusive trade agreements, the practices followed were not examples of corporate efficiency, but were conspiracy and theft. Later on the separated Standard companies, together with the Texas Company, Gulf, and the larger independents, hit upon the scheme of the posted price. This is a means by which they could conceal evidence of agreement between themselves, and at the same time arbitrarily raise the price of their product where they competed only with each other, while they jointly undercut the prices of their smaller competitors in other localities. This is still one of the two major sources of profit to the larger oil companies. It is in no sense efficient in the interest of the entire industry or of the public, but is simply a concerted scheme to evade state regulation, while at the same time it evades federal regulation by splitting company stocks and company profits into separate sets of company accounts, each of which claims the immunities allowed to a local and intra-state business.

When a modern corporation, whether operating in oil, sugar, copper, steel, machinery, transportation, or chain-store selling, subdivides and standardizes the duties of each employee until he is a specialist within a very narrow and mechanical mould, the apparent economy in production or in sales may be attained at the cost of a tremendous and deadening overhead supervision, plus an extremely low wage-scale for the vast majority of company employees. In the retail grocery trade, for instance, governmental research has made a number of comparisons of chain-store organizations with groups of small independent grocers doing an equivalent total of business. It has invariably been found that the chain has a slight advantage in the purchase of quantity goods, ranging from one per cent to as much as twenty-four per cent in some particular small-selling items. A larger proportion of the chain corporations are found paying dividends than among the independent grocers. More significant than this, however, is the fact that even while the chain store appropriates to its profits the larger part of its saving in quantity purchases and sells its goods at a higher average mark-up in prices, yet the independent groups always pay a higher average profit in the combined items of dividends and wages than do the chain stores, and there is invariably a higher average wage paid by individual private grocers than by the chain-store corporations.

The fact that the Aluminum Company of America monopolizes more than ninety per cent of aluminum production in this country is not in itself any striking evidence of corporate efficiency. Quite to the contrary, the ten-year fixed level of aluminum prices which the company has arbitrarily maintained overlaps four years of the greatest depression and price decline in modern industrial history, and is only an indication that aluminum profits are primarily dependent upon a monopoly of patented processes and an unwise exploitation of the consuming public.

The permanent lease on life which corporations possess tends more and more to concentrate within a few hands the ownership and control of general property. In 1928 two hundred of the largest American corporations were said to be owners of more than fifty per cent of the income-producing property within the United States, and were reputed to be the primary producers of an even larger proportion of the total national income. It is probable that the process of concentration has been hastened by the depression. Since 1928, for instance, the loan corporations financed by the United States government alone have come into the possession of more than one-fourth of all the real estate mortgages of the nation, the twenty largest life insurance companies hold nearly sixty per cent of the remainder, and less than five per cent of the total are in the hands of private individuals. The disproportionate distribution of the national wealth is evidently due in large part to the corporate tendency to mass larger and larger aggregates of ownership, which are held together by corporate permanence and corporate inertia long after the economic advantage of their first grouping has entirely disappeared.

Corporate permanence beyond a single generation with the prospect of an indefinite continuance surely encourages corporate managements and encourages the incorporated vendors of credit to defer and to refund the payment of their bonded indebtedness. This not only absorbs a source of credit which should be mobile and directed toward newly productive enterprises, but the totals of corporate debts are thus continually expanded and far exceed the proportion of debts to assets usual for privately owned property. Further, the very human tendency of a delegated corporate management to preserve dividends by issuing bonds and stock certificates to cover the costs of new business and plant extensions inevitably leads to an exaggerated and unsound expectation of permanently maintained corporate profits. In such case it is also inevitable that any interruption to corporate profits or shock to the maintenance of contractual obligations is magnified by the abruptly realized insecurity of a large part of the pyramided corporate structure. Both as a cause of the present depression and as an active ingredient in the panics which mark the first stages of every depression, expanded and long-time corporation debts are not a source of security but are highly dangerous.

Corporate limitations on the individual responsibility of their organizers and the owners of stock, and the independent form which the management of the larger corporations tends to take, are even more socially objectionable. In the two hundred American corporations referred to above, there are less than three thousand separate individuals serving as directors. Of these perhaps one-third to one-half take no active part whatever in their management. On the other hand, there are perhaps one million to one and a half-million individuals, investors and putative owners of these corporations, who enjoy the expectation of profits without responsibility, and most of whom are both ignorant and morally unconcerned as to the management of their property. Large corporation practice has thus transferred to the field of American business precisely the same deadening economic and social results that flow from absentee landlordism, but complicated by the fact that our corporate system involves a vastly larger number of absentee owners and exploited employees than were ever anywhere involved in the delegated management of landed estates.

Limitations of space and patience prevent a more complete catalogue of items indicating the necessity for adequate corporation regulation. In such a catalogue would certainly appear the Telephone Trust, the holding companies, some of the public utilities, the sweat shops of the garment trades, the textiles, and the state-chartered corporations owned by the national government.

III

I propose a constitutional amendment giving to the Congress an original authority over every phase of corporation activities; their incorporation, issues of securities, their liabilities and privileges, the conduct of their corporate purposes, and the modes and amounts of their taxation. Within this amendment there should be provision for the delegation to the states of such portions of these responsibilities as the Congress may deem advisable for the corporate conduct of purely local and intra-state businesses and foundations.

The political implications of such an amendment and the conduct of the campaign for its adoption must be left for other treatment. It is quite in order here, however, to consider that we should lay out for discussion the possible means of regulation that the Congress may adopt, and should bring to the advocacy of the proposal some unified and workable philosophy of corporation control. Again, however, neither the philosophy nor the program can be complete or too precisely detailed in its first presentation, nor do I think that they should be in advance of a more general consideration of the entire subject.

I suppose that the Congress will give to the states authority to charter and to regulate distinctly local corporations, and that it will define the nature of these. This responsibility should be extended subject to at least two general restraints:

1. The restriction of state-chartered corporations to property ownership and to business activities wholly within the boundaries of the single state within which the charter is granted.
2. The restriction of the probable or profitable term of life of a state-chartered corporation through nationally imposed selective heavy inheritance taxes on the transfer of its shares or assets.

Under these restrictions it may be expected that state corporations will continue as at present in the performance of local or state semi-governmental functions such as the conduct of a city water-works, the administration of irrigation or drainage canals, and other enterprises of a public nature where it is advisable to have a more unified and more specifically delegated authority than the purely political subdivisions of a state can usually exert. For precisely the same reasons the restrictions suggested will not at all affect local charitable, educational, or public-service foundations, since these enterprises also are without stock-holders whose shares have any ratable or inheritable valuation.

In private business state-chartered corporations could well be made subject to simpler regulation than those now common, and they should replace purely personal business partnerships to a greater extent than they now do. The relatively shorter profitable life of a state-chartered corporation which heavy inheritance taxation would encourage, will operate to produce a more direct personal responsibility in corporation management. It will also encourage the formation of new concerns whose services and policies are a natural response to immediate social and business needs, and it will considerably decrease the probability that corporate organizations will acquire fixed special privileges or the permanent control of social services. Even more important than this in orienting the state corporations in the national scheme is the effect that these restrictions will have upon corporate debts. The shorter term of corporate life will bring corporate bonds into a more equitable competition with the private individual seeking credit, will very definitely discourage re-funding operations which expand and overload corporate debts, and will make the personal responsibility of corporation managers and owners a more important item in the discovery of corporate credit.

The reserved authorities of the Congress under the amendment should be exercised primarily in the regulation of nationally chartered corporations. The general declaration of such a governmental policy is completely set out in the following three items:

1. The requirement of federal incorporation of all corporations engaged in inter-state businesses, and of corporations notably affected with a national public interest. Among these are banks, transportation and communication lines, and such other businesses as the Congress may specify.
2. The classification of all federal-chartered corporations into one of at least three general groups:
   - A. Corporations engaged in interstate business or trade but whose operations are not notably affected with a public interest.
   - B. Charitable and educational foundations operating in an inter-state field, banks, and other corporations notably affecting the national public interest, but not to the extent that it is advisable that the federal government directly own or operate them.
   - C. Corporations whose public character is such that their national ownership is highly probable or is in some stage of accomplishment.
3. A planned and graduated supervision of federal-chartered corporations, ranging from a minimum oversight of debt services and issues of securities in the first group, up to a complete federal administration or ownership of some particular corporations in the third group.

The philosophy of federal regulation implied in the articles assumes that the combination of private interests into corporate aggregations is both legitimate and necessary, but it also assumes that such aggregates are only to be allowed when clearly in the public interest. These articles of general policy also imply that there are limitations in the proper exercise of governmental controls quite as fundamental as the authority that a constitutional amendment may confer. They clearly indicate that the only proper function of governmental interference in corporate management is oversight or regulation and not government operation; and the maintenance of this principle is fully as necessary to corporate integrity as is the balance of governmental powers to the liberty of the private citizen.

The proposed constitutional amendment and the definition and direction of the powers which the Congress will assume must as a matter of course be implemented by a body of specific corporate regulations and by the organization of executive means for their enforcement. Some of these may be suggested here.

The personal liability of the stock-holders for the debts of a federal corporation should be extended to an amount at least equal to twice the proportionate investment of each stock-holder. This is a step toward a greater personal liability and a consequent greater personal responsibility of the stock-holders for the conduct of the corporate enterprise. It does not at all complete the assignment of the responsibilities necessary for a management in the public interest, and some part of this must be supplied by governmental oversight, as it is manifestly impossible for all the owners of any large corporation to be aware of every corporate activity. In personal partnerships every member of the partnership is liable for the entire amount of the firm's indebtedness, a responsibility at first proportionately and jointly undertaken by all the members of the firm and next individually assessed to any single member of the firm whose private means are not exhausted by the joint assessment. Except in case of national banks the present liability of corporate owners does not exist except as the possible loss of the value of stock may be called a liability; under the suggested regulation each stock-holder would be personally responsible for a possible double proportion of the corporate debts after the joint responsibility had exhausted the private means of other stock-holders, a limited and yet a flexible responsibility.

All issue of stocks in a federal corporation should be under governmental supervision; and the later issues of bonds of the corporation should also be supervised together with the debt service set up for the retirement of bonded indebtedness. As a general business principle, no corporation should issue or re-fund its evidences of indebtedness except as debt services are set up and provision currently made for the orderly retirement of the debt. Ordinarily no corporate bonds should be allowed issuance where the term of re-payment is excessively deferred, and permanent obligations should be replaced by issues of stock. To protect the interests of private individuals in the competition for business credit, the usual term of bond re-payment should not be longer extended than the normal expectation of business life for the private individual, which is perhaps a term of twenty to twenty-five years. Some such control in the national interest is equally imperative to check the increasing totals of expanded corporate indebtedness, an increase which is not only explosively dangerous in periods of depression, but which implies such an impossibly progressive expansion of the field of corporate exploitation that the periodic collapse of the entire structure of corporate credit is absolutely inevitable. Expansion of debts in compound proportion is the fundamental fallacy of American business.

The Congress should impose a corporation charter tax of perhaps one-half of one per cent annually on the par value of all capital stocks, plus an assets tax of perhaps three-quarters of one per cent on all assets of any corporation in excess of the total value of its capital stock. Issues of no-par-value stock should only be allowed for charitable, educational, and governmentally sponsored corporations. Such regulation would provide a very large federal revenue, and would much more than cover the entire cost of the national supervision of corporations. It would in particular keep the capital structure of corporate units so responsive to their actual corporate conditions that governmental supervision would be easy and the responsibility of corporate owners much more adequately defined than at present.

The federal government should restrict corporate holdings of stock in other corporations, and should carefully define the functions of management and investment corporations. By means of selective confiscatory taxation on the transfer of corporate profits from one corporation to another, the government should make the operation of holding companies unprofitable except in the execution of trusteeships and similar non-management relations.

It is impossible in any limited space to refer to every type of federal regulation that would be made possible under a unified system of corporate controls, but it is evident to everyone that much of the system of anti-trust legislation should be replaced; the present Securities Act should not depend for its legality on the flimsy constitutional pretext of a postal regulation; and without some coordination with other governmental policies the President's Public Utilities Bill will continue to be an isolated raid on capitalism and a discrimination against the investment of private capital in the public utilities field.

IV

Finally, and in anticipation of several certainly proposed objections, a definite and unified treatment of the entire corporation problem is the only possible alternative either to a cumulative continuation of the present inequitable system, or to the complete obliteration of private business enterprise by the overwhelming control of a socialist or corporate state. I cannot anticipate any improvement from within the system itself, nor can I think it possible for the separate states so to concert their action as to produce any permanent reform.

The present corporate economy cannot do other than oppose the private economy; it must by its very nature continue to lessen private opportunity and the security of the individual; and it must very often and finally propose the corporate exploitation of every individual and private right.

A Bad Novel

Dorothea Brande

For one's sins, it is sometimes necessary to read a bad book twice; such a book, for instance, as Mr. Robert Briffault's *Europa*.* Who could have foreseen when it appeared in the vanguard of last autumn's books that nearly half a year later it would still be fourth from the lead on the lists of best-selling fiction? To be sure it was launched with a thundering roar; but that critical roar has gone up before now and died out in the immense inane. This time the salvos still echo.

A hasty glance, at the time of its appearance, was enough to show that the book would be readily marketable, and that it would be the lending-libraries' despair – since a book so long, so dull, so windy is always a bad "mover" when the pornography which is the major reason for its popularity with the crowd is not neatly isolated in one section or a few chapters, but so spread throughout that not a page can be skipped except at the risk of missing some salaciousness. But it could have been popular without approval.

Fortunately for *Europa*, there was its pretentiousness. There is always a market, and a respectful market, for that; always innumerable spirits eager to breast the Hellespont with Halliburton, consider Karma with Keyserling, or see Divine Philosophy in the rôle of Pandar to a hero of Mr. Charles Morgan's.

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* EUROPA: THE DAYS OF IGNORANCE *by Robert Briffault* (SCRIBNER'S. 501 pp. $2.75).

The Hellespont, Karma, and Philosophy are great, deep, cultural subjects; what joy, then, to meet them in a way which exacts no intellectual discipline, and subsequently to be able to discuss them at cocktail parties, teas, or while the cards are being dealt and considered.

Still, the most initiated reviewer must have thought, it would not be so easy to make the central contribution of *Europa* into social conversation. It has an idea, of course; but in the discussions of the book which have been going on since last fall, very little breath has been spent on the hero's notion that man is a cell in the body of society. Although this idea does certainly give grounds for discussion, few arguments either for or against it have been heard when this "great novel" has been under consideration. Rather breathless and emotional praise of Mr. Briffault's honesty is more general; but it is unlikely that except in the strongholds of bohemian Manhattan much has been openly said as to what Mr. Briffault has been being honest about. It is, somehow, a little difficult to believe that, in those minor cities and large towns which are now rallying to *Europa's* standard, the individual counts of this honesty are mentioned except behind closed doors and sheltering hands.

But the book is a masterpiece, we were told by almost every liberal or leftist reviewer in the country on the date of publication. "To the pure all things are pure," we were warned and reproached when isolated protests at its gratuitous filth began to make themselves heard; you cannot measure genius by the prudish standard of the common man. And, obedient to the reviewers and the demands of their clients, book-sellers and librarians all over the country turned in their orders and requisitions for *Europa*. Many a conscientious librarian must have handed the huge tome out twenty times — to young men and women, adolescent boys and girls — before finding the opportunity to look within its covers; librarians everywhere, who, in the absence of a watchful church or state, are almost the sole remaining bulwark between our children and the vicious, subversive, or shoddy literature which floods the country in the guise of experimental novels or this season's "masterpieces". Overworked, underpaid, sturdy guardians of always dwindling financial appropriations, they have been stampeded and swindled into spending money, "the taxpayer's money", for a book to corrupt the taxpayer's child.

It seems likely that when the book is bought and read by a mature individual citizen it will rapidly provide its own prophylaxis. Parents have not changed so radically in these last enlightened years as to be willing to pour poison into their children, even when urged to do so in the name of enlightenment by the journalist critics of New York. But where parents do not or cannot read there is real danger. Tens of thousands of copies have been sold, and fully a quarter of them, at a hazard, have been read. And what has it profited the readers?

Well, assuming for the moment that purity can remain unalloyed after immersion in long passages of the most explicit perversion, what adventure *has* the reader of *Europa* had which would not have been his if by great good fortune he had missed this book?

First, he has had the chance of reading the most childishly amorphous novel which has ever been issued over a reputable publisher's imprint. Mr. Briffault has, for some advantage seen only by himself, chosen to begin the book's action by passing it through the mind of a shadowy first-person narrator. This device must have troubled even Mr. Briffault, for he abandons it almost at once, resumes it only occasionally, and always mysteriously. Most of the book is seen from the vantage-point of its hero, Julian Bern, and must necessarily be seen through his eyes if the book is not to forfeit what may loosely be termed its virtues. For the stay-at-home Englishman who speaks in the first chapter is a dull fellow, hardly getting about at all, and in the interests of cosmopolitanism Mr. Briffault and his hero must jump all over England, Italy, and western Europe. A college sophomore could have told Mr. Briffault that this device of his was a serious flaw, fatal to the production of a masterpiece.

Next, *Europa's* reader has had the stirring experience of reading a dime novel, put out at the price of two dollars and seventy-five cents. If it is necessary — and it undoubtedly is for some book-buyers — for him to be a financial dupe before he makes the acquaintance of one great class of fiction, the more instructed reader is hard put to it to define the emotion which rises in his breast when he observes his neighbor's plight. Thousands of us, I should guess, have at some period in our lives evaded the watchful parental eye and raided the servants' thrilling libraries; and with coats hung over transoms, or flat beneath a sheltering bed, have plunged into *Tempest and Sunshine* or *St. Elmo*. In a summer cottage once rented by my family I found a whole treasure-trove of such trash, and read myself sick of it, at the age of eleven, in three weeks. On those who truly and deeply appreciate the genius of Mr. Briffault I am in a position to bestow an inestimable boon: *Wedded but No Wife*, in, I believe, the Seaside Library, is better written than *Europa* and infinitely less nauseating. The title is not so imposing, but the contents are superior.

To bear out the contention that Mr. Briffault rivals Laura Jean Libby and Augusta J. Evans (Rhoda Broughton and "Ouida" are no more to be mentioned in the same breath with him than Tolstoy and Balzac), we must go for a moment into the matter of his style. Not since that summer years ago have I read of so many, or such scrupulously described, "toilettes". His women wear (although the author is part French) "the *dernier cris* of the mode", and they wear them, of course, to "the function of the season". Perhaps those earlier authors were too simple to write that "The orgiastic display of feminine flesh formed a background for the luxurious elegance of the fashionable throng of women", but I'll warrant they would have bowed before their master if they could have read it. This touch about the Baroness Rubenstein would be well within their scope: "The sumptuous toilette of champagne-colored eolienne, with gold Louis XV buckles, which she was wearing, eclipsed the attire of the duchesses, and the tiara of diamonds that crowned her raven-black tresses was worth a king's ransom." (A proud beauty of *my* three weeks' reading, also with raven tresses, wore the tiara's full equal, likewise worth a king's ransom – a *parure* of pearls.)

Yes, for chapters on end *Europa* is the backstairsnovel to the life, with dukes and duchesses – *Grand* Dukes and *Grand* Duchesses – on almost every page; one of them had a palace: "The place was the talk of Italy. . . . There were whispers of indescribable orgies." To the life!

But suppose the hypothetical unfortunate reader is a cut above being thrilled by titles, is not even subject to the reverse-snobbery which loves to be told that Lords and Ladies, Kings, Czarinas, and Grand Dukes, are brutal, perverted, stupid, superstitious, and insane? Suppose he is quite capable of judging that such a sentence as "She herself suffered from an unfortunate predisposition to eczema, and her somewhat blotchy complexion, which an inordinate use of cold cream did not avail to temper, was at a particular disadvantage in the immediate proximity of women epidermally more fortunate" would never be found in a masterpiece of any order, not even a "cerebral novel". Is there not still something in the book for him?

Again, and freely, there is: if he has missed *Sandford and Merton* or the *Rollo* books, let him look here. For our hero, Julian Bern, resembles Rollo as – to call on Professor Babbitt's favorite figure – a hollow resembles a bump. He is Rollo-in-reverse, he is an Anti-Rollo. Early, early in the book he had a headier prospect, a Dionysiac and ecstatic hope. A half-blind German philosopher, whom the knowledgeable critics were at no loss to recognize as Nietzsche, put his hand on the infant Julian's head within the first few pages, murmuring, "Thou mightest be He." But Julian is not the stuff of which an Anti-Christ is made. He is no more than Rollo-in-reverse.

Does it sound hard to believe, of the successful novel of the autumn and winter? Then here is Julian, very young, as he begins to realize the immensity of the "lies" he has been taught about religion, tradition, conventions, and the Church:

> "I don't want to make a fuss. I'm simply staying away from chapel, that's all," said Julian.
>
> "But there would be an awful row. . . . The beak on duty would tick you off. . . ." Harry said.
>
> "What could they do to me?" Julian said.
>
> "Oh, there'd be a big row," said Harry. "Boys have been tanned for missing chapel. . . ."
>
> "And yet you said just now that it was of no consequence. . . ." said Julian, with a wry smile.
>
> "But you can't go against the rules," said Harry.
>
> "Why can't I? It's a rule not to tell lies, isn't it? If I went to chapel I should be telling a lie, a big lie," Julian said.

Are these not the accents of an Anti-Rollo? But in one way, it is true, Julian departs from the norm, as Rollo or Elsie Dinsmore would rather have died than do: he went to chapel and let convictions go hang.

No other benefits than these? Indeed there are! Follow Julian and Mr. Briffault far enough and you will see what nonsense it is that you should have thought all these years that there was anything to philosophy. If it had come in time *Europa* might have made *The Fountain* superfluous. Here is Julian, as his college years come to an end, settling philosophy, as you can easily see, once and for all:

> "Who was Plato?" asked Joe Cunningham, large-handed oarsman, humble, avid of knowledge.

"The founder of Christendom," Julian replied, "notorious as the disseminator and popularizer of the immortal impalpable soul, who got it from the theosophist Pythagoras [elsewhere in *Europa* spelt Pithagoras], who got it straight from the Wisdom of the Yogi East, which got it from the Medicine-men waving the scapula of a sheep and bags of dead men's bones, who got it from *Homo Neanderthal*, who got it from his bemused interpretations of dreams and his impalpable shadow."

There! And oh, there are a-many other revelations to us from anthropology, harder to prove than that other Revelation Mr. Briffault and his kind are out to clear away, turning on themselves so wonderfully that the final wonder is what the Anthropologist has left from which to make his world. Julian, for instance, on page 374, partakes of "the savage celebration of the wedding-feast", sustained through the savage ordeal by his private scorn. Now what, in the name of heaven, does such a phrase as that imply? Why not "the human celebration"? It takes an anthropologist, student of the parvenu Science of Mankind, to intimate that a savage does not partake of our common human nature, or to remain unmoved when he finds in the savage, openly celebrating his open choice of a mate, the foreshadowing of the knowledge that matrimony is a sacrament.

This hero who "twits" and "rallies" his women, who demands to be "unhanded" by a misunderstanding Russian, who laughs at the *mots* of his duchesses when they would not raise a smile from the sickliest boot-licking toady of the social system he hates, who regards the world so steadily, unwarped by any credence in the conventions and traditions that for generations have sustained his fellows — in himself and by himself, what an unutterable bore he is! "The Devil is an ass," says a good old folk-phrase, which returns again and again to the mind of the reader of *Europa*, tempting him to underrate his enemy.

Dismissal is too easy. For one reader that *Europa* bores there must be twenty it impresses. It is no masterpiece. Its influence must be looked for not in any subtleties of style, not in any magnificence of form, not in any penetration into human nature and human motives; yet it does impress. That is why, for the sin of dismissing it too easily, I have had to read it again. Now, if all the qualities which make a novel — omitting for the moment the absurd claims to genius — are looked for and not found, perhaps it will be admitted by even those most prejudiced in the book's favor that we may fairly look for its impressiveness to those elements which remain when the claims of literature are justly dismissed.

Well, then, we are left with these things: the hero Julian's growing conviction that man is a cell in the social body; four scenes of flagellation; pornography which runs the gamut from childish nastiness to a scene where Mr. Briffault, taking a leaf from those anthropological documents which drop into hog-Latin now and again to retail the cruder myths, drops into French argot. But first, last, and all the time, this book is impressive to one great class of readers for its anti-religious tendency, and, specifically, for its anti-Christianity; and for that virtue they have forced it upon the reading public.

So the Devil is not such an ass, after all. He can make himself seem one, and so put us to sleep or stir us to contempt. Because those ways in which this book is meant to resemble a novel are so absurd, because although it is obscenely filthy it is also abysmally dull – a judgement which seems a paradox only to the adolescent or the truly vulgar – we are tempted to laugh it away and dismiss it. But the legions of evil are behind it; they carry it over the land. Disguised as the advance-guard of light, as the advocates of honesty, as the messengers of human brotherhood, they take simple people – ashamed of their rectitude in the face of their intellectual betters' "tolerance", blushing to admit themselves confused by close acquaintance with such obscenity and blasphemy as others can bear without wincing – as dupes and prisoners into the Adversary's camp. And after them, led by the nose, go the young people.

Perhaps it is not utterly beyond belief that there may some day be another Inquisition.

The Political Economy of Regionalism

DONALD DAVIDSON

WHEN the older school of American historians had to record the actions of contiguous groups of states that united to protect their common interests, they called the phenomenon *sectionalism* and stigmatized it as anti-national. The younger historians – and with them sociologists, political scientists, economists, and even men of letters – encountering the same phenomenon, name it *regionalism* and hail it with geniality or at least with resignation. To them it is not an anti-national force but the condition itself of nationalism in a country as large and as notably diverse in its geographic divisions as our country is. Seemingly they grant that the nation has already fulfilled a prophecy made nearly twenty years ago by F. J. Turner. If the reader will substitute the more fashionable word *region* for the word *section* in the passage which follows, he will have a description of the sort of nation that students of regionalism now believe the United States to be. Turner said:

> . . . As the nation reaches a more stable equilibrium, a more settled state of society, with denser populations pressing upon the means of existence, with this population no longer migratory, the influence of the diverse physiographic provinces which make up the nation will become more marked. They will exercise sectionalizing influences, tending to mould society to their separate conditions, in spite of all the countervailing tendencies

toward national uniformity. National action will be forced to recognize and adjust itself to these conflicting sectional interests. The more the nation is organized on the principle of direct majority rule, and consolidation, the more sectional resistance is likely to manifest itself. Statesmen in the future, as in the past, will achieve their leadership by voicing the interests and ideas of the sections which have shaped these leaders, and they will exert their influence nationally by making combinations between sections and by accommodating their policy to the needs of such alliances. Congressional legislation will be shaped by compromises and combinations, which will in effect be treaties between rival sections, and the real federal aspect of our government will lie, not in the relation of state and nation, but in the relation of section and nation.

The aptness of Turner's prophecy can now be seen by all but the dullest observers. The "diverse physiographic provinces", with their separate regional cultures, can be mapped with some definiteness. In rough outline, with sub-regions granted as also having their importance, they are: the Northeast, the South or Southeast, the Middle West, the Southwest, the Far West. Population has grown denser; it presses upon the means of production if not upon the means of existence. Economic specialization has encouraged marked regional interests: there is a financial-industrial Northeast, a cotton-tobacco-and-small-farm Southeast, a wheat-and-corn Middle West, an oil-and-cotton Southwest, a fruit-truck-and-lumber Far West. The newer regions in their maturity have developed a regional self-consciousness as marked as in the older regions. Regional interests clash and are represented by warring statesmen: a Long, a Nye, a

La Guardia, a Norris, a Walsh. Above all, the policy of economic nationalism developed under the Roosevelt administration – and likely to be continued, if students of affairs argue correctly, under succeeding administrations – represents a determined effort to secure the "stable equilibrium" which Turner foretold. It is being achieved by a pressure of regional "combinations" (South and West) against a resisting and greatly apprehensive Northeast.

Only the last clause of Turner's prophecy remains unfulfilled, partly, it may be, because it touches a problem not only unsolved, but not understood, not even dimly visualized in some high quarters. There is no general readiness of our statesmen to acknowledge that the true Federalism consists in the relation of region (or "section") and nation. We still insist upon the letter of the Constitution and hold that Federalism lies in the relation of state and nation. Nothing, indeed, in Turner's remark could be taken as an advocacy of change. As historian he was concerned only to say what the real Federal relation seemed to be. To grasp this reality by some political instrumentation which would replace the fiction of the older Federalism was not his task. Possibly he meant to leave only the implication that, if no change should be made, the regional jockeying and compromising would go on indefinitely behind the Federal screen.

To solve the problem of the new Federalism must be the task of this generation. If we decline to face the problem, some Turner of the future, arriving at the story of the nineteen-thirties, will pause in his lecture and say with emphasis: *At this point regional* *differences passed beyond the possibility of adjustment under the Federal system, and here, therefore, began the dismemberment of the United States, long since foreshadowed in the struggle of the eighteen-sixties.* But he might state a different result, now before us as a possibility: *At this point the ordinary processess of Federal government failed to serve the national purposes. A dictatorship ensued.*

In order to see what the problem is, it is necessary to recognize first of all that regional differentiations are social and economic fact, and not poetic fiction. I cannot here elaborate the proof of this statement, but it is available. The skeptic who refuses the testimony of history, of sociological and economic findings, of studies in folk-lore or physiography, will do well to turn traveller and receive the testimony of eye and ear. Or let him reflect upon the arrangement of a *Literary Digest* poll by regions or listen to the campaign talk of those who will tell how the West or the East will vote. The differentiations are the result of the occupation of a continental area by a vigorous people, habituated to a high degree of independence and self-determination, and shaped by diverse racial, social, political, and environmental influences. The history of the American establishment implies, if it does not enforce, diversity rather than uniformity. We can take little pride in the American tradition unless we concede that it tolerates and encourages such diversity. But it makes no difference whether we deplore or welcome regional differentiations. They are here, and even the most determined of economic determinists knows that they must be reckoned with.

The diversity of regions rather enriches the national life than impoverishes it, and their mere existence as regions cannot be said to constitute a problem. Rather in their differences they are a national advantage, offering not only the charm of variety but the interplay of points of view that ought to give flexibility and wisdom. For the United States the ideal condition would be this: that the regions should be free to cultivate their own particular genius and to find their happiness, along with their sustenance and security, in the pursuits to which their people are best adapted, the several regions supplementing and aiding each other, in national comity, under a well-balanced economy.

That has not happened. They have not been good neighbors. They have continually quarrelled. Human nature being what it is, it might be beyond reason to expect otherwise. But, the American political genius being what it has been, we might reasonably expect that some provision should be made for preventing conflict or moderating it when it occurs. No such means has been provided. The Federal Constitution, for reasons obvious to all who have studied it and know its history, not only does not make such provision, but by certain clauses prohibits regional combinations and in general thwarts regional expression.

This no doubt deliberate exclusion of regions from all legal consideration has not, in the long run, resulted in a true Federalism, nor has it even preserved the interest of states. Instead it has brought about regional imperialism. That is, it has encouraged the appropriation of Federal authority by the region which has had the means to lay hold upon it, and it has reduced the regions (and within them the states) to the position of complaisant accomplices or servile dependents.

There have been various attempts, some successful, some but partially successful, to use the Federal power in this way. The Jacksonian West, under Jackson, Van Buren, and Polk, exercised a form of regional imperialism which the Northeast might well think about, just now. Turner's posthumous book, *The United States, 1830-1850* gives a detailed study of this imperialism. The long quarrel between North and South over the western lands was a struggle of warring imperialisms, each eager to secure – always with due pretense of Federal sanction – the benefits of colonial territory. Of the South it might be said that its imperial designs did not contemplate imposing its peculiar institutions upon the sacred sod of Massachusetts. But the South feared, with justice, that Northern imperialism did most emphatically mean the substitution of a factory system for a plantation system in Virginia. Anticipating that event and finding itself without recourse, since it was outvoted under the Federal system, the South strove for independence.

The South was defeated and was haled back, in the status of a subject province, into the shell of the old Union. In that condition, though with the barren comfort of technical political rights for its states, the South has remained. For from the moment of Southern defeat, the regional imperialism of the Northeast began its effective reign.

In the sixty years from Grant to Hoover the

United States have gone though the formality of sixteen presidential elections. The elected candidates, in the President's chair and in Congress, were supposed to represent the people and to foster the general welfare. In practice, they represented the will of the Northeast and fostered the welfare of the Northeast. The Northeast has ruled, with occasional concessions to its turbulent and increasingly doubtful ally, the West. Through the agency of the Federal mechanism the Northeast has achieved its regional purposes: a high protective tariff; a gold standard; a treasury policy favorable to bankers and investors; a Fourteenth Amendment, "ratified" at the point of the bayonet, to safeguard corporations; an "open door" to its foreign imperialism in the West Indies, Central America, and the Pacific; and above all an "unprotected" area within the boundaries of the United States – "the greatest free trade area in the world" – for its commercial domain.

In these years the Northeast has been the imperial capital region, and the other regions, including even the West, have been the colonial dependencies from which it bought cheap and to which it sold dear, often enough with something added over and above high-tariff prices for interest on Northeastern money loaned to buy Northeastern goods. Grudgingly but wisely, the Northeast has yielded a point or two here and there – less to promote "national interest" than to soothe regional unrest: an Interstate Commerce Commission (which, though helpful to the West, has been notoriously unfavorable to the South); a Federal Income Tax (which Mr. Morgan in later years somehow did not have to pay); and a Federal

Reserve System (which looked pretty bad to Northeastern eyes—for a while). But in the main the Northeast did not yield too much. The fruits of its unyielding domination are there today for anybody to see, in its vast concentration of wealth and population, its splendid metropolitan centers, its universities, foundations, magazines, publishing houses, art galleries, museums, theaters, banks, harbors, its towering buildings envied by all the world, its sense of being well off—of being at the central strategic point.

There are other results of Northeastern imperialism. Although, since sinfulness knows no regions, it does little good now to load American sins upon a regional scapegoat, the fact remains that the Northeast has been the chief agent and the chief sponsor of the large-scale industrialism which we are now put to so much trouble to manage. The Northeast has manipulated the Federal mechanism so as to encourage, as a cardinal objective of national policy, a gross over-emphasis on industrialism and speculative finance, with a corresponding injury and neglect of agriculture and small business, to say nothing of the general injury resulting to manners, morals, and human happiness—in the Northeast as elsewhere. To be altogether fair, we should remember that some far-seeing Northeasterners have protested against this state of affairs—regional dissenters, reflective and doubtful. Nevertheless, if any one region is more guilty than another of having brought about by deliberate policy the crisis of the nineteen-thirties, that region is the Northeast.

At least the outlying regions of the West and South are inclined to draw the indictment thus. The

West has a feeling of having been "played for a sucker". It now begins to see, what the South has long known, that under present arrangements a national policy that means wealth for the Northeast may well mean poverty for the sister regions. Northeastern imperialism somehow draws all to itself, and the crumbs from Dives' table are no longer the surplusage but only the crumbs of a theoretically national feast. The old outcry against Wall Street is an outcry against a regional foe symbolized by a single institution. It means that the towers of New York are built upon Southern and Western backs.

Does the Northeast exclaim in horror at the spectacle of Southern lands eroded and worn-out, at the devilish one-crop system and the tenant system, at the burned and cut-over mountain slopes, the illiterate and diseased population, the fierce despair or the terrifying apathy of large districts, rural and urban? Let him never think that these sins against good order were wilfully committed or arose from human sloth and malignity alone. The ravaged lands of the South are, rather, a mute testimony, indeed a fearful accusation, against a distant tyranny of money — which the South did not have and was forced to try to gain.

The Southern planter or farmer (and not only the Southern one!) gullied and exhausted his lands, sold his timber, held his tenants pinned with a dollar mark, not because he was a limb of Satan but because money had to be forthcoming — and that quickly — for shoes and hats from tariff-protected factories; money for farm machinery, kerosene, gasoline, fertilizer, cooking-stoves, knives, axes, automobiles, all financed and produced under the imperial scheme; money for mortgages and loans, to placate the sucking tentacle-tip of the money octopus flung far to seize him; money for taxes to run schools on the new model furnished by the Northeast — and, yes, indirectly to swell the endowment of Teachers College of Columbia University and keep its well-marshalled hosts employed; money for more taxes for still more public improvements — new roads, new courthouses (with *steel* filing cabinets), and new bureaus upon bureaus; money for interest on the national debt, covered by bonds gilt-edged, good as gold, offering Hamiltonian conveniences to banks and security-venders; money for the new Northeastern idea of insurance, to hedge him against the liabilities and calamities forced upon him by the system and to bury him when, lifeless, moneyless, and propertyless, he should deliver his soul to his Maker and his body to a mortician who is one of the most valued members of the Chamber of Commerce. For all the while prodigious and faithful though his labor might have been, the money for these things came to him in a niggardly trickle, if at all, but it poured Northeast in flood. The South has learned this lesson well. And now the West may learn it, too — may know that the West goes in overalls that the Northeast may walk in silk and satin.

The colonialized regions, thus threatened with exploitation to the point of exhaustion, have tried to meet the danger in two ways. First, they have recapitulated to a certain extent the history of all colonies that begin as dependents furnishing raw materials and wind up with producing establishments and even financial centers of their own. All the regions have moved toward this kind of self-sufficiency. But they still find themselves paying a good deal of tribute to centralized monopoly, and they also find that this kind of self-sufficiency brings evils of its own. Second, they have made a political fight where they could, especially on such issues as silver, the tariff, currency inflation, and taxation.

Both methods are a kind of civil warfare among regions. Both, as the Northeast well recognizes, are dangerous to Northeastern power. At the moment they seem to be more dangerous than at any time since 1860. The Northeast now faces the ultimate consequences of its imperial exploitation of the "greatest free trade area in the world". Regional imperialism is about to be met by regional imperialism, with the South and West combining against the Northeast and attempting, by the Jacksonian strategy, while holding their own ranks intact, to divide the Northeast against itself so as to annex the "doubtful" states. This is clearly foreshadowed in some measures of the Roosevelt administration: the AAA, the Bankhead Farm Tenant Bill and the cotton-control bill, the banking legislation, the devaluation of the dollar, the SEC, the TVA. The tendency is also indicated in the pressure of "share the wealth" schemes and in the intransigeance of the silver and inflation blocs.

If a South-and-West victory should start another cycle of regional imperialism, the results for the Northeast would be severe, but they would represent, in the eyes of the victors, a restoration of justice. The Northeast would be shorn of much of its power – much, but hardly enough, I imagine, to justify the fear of Christian Gauss of Princeton that Rooseveltian economic nationalism will ruin the great cities of the Eastern seaboard; or to fulfill the prophecy of the Confederate poet, Henry Timrod, who foresaw in 1862 a doom preparing for such cities –

There, where some rotting ships and crumbling quays
Shall one day mark the Port which ruled the Western
seas.

And, though no man would be so rash as Timrod now, it is not stretching possibility far to view the situation of the Northeast as like that of the South in 1860. Although the Northeast should vote unanimously against the hostile combination, it might still find itself in a minority, able to protest, but otherwise without recourse. If that should happen, will the Northeast sit still and suffer?

But that is precisely the kind of situation that advocates of regionalism are anxious to forestall. The problem lies here. The vicious element is not regionalism but regional imperialism. Regionalists would seek to eliminate the possibility of regional imperialism in any quarter by correcting the form of our governing instruments, so as to adapt them to reality. If regional injustice should occur, they are loath to see the offended region left without recourse. If they can help it, they would not permit what Calhoun called the tyranny of the majority.

It is now in order to review some of the suggestions that have been made for attending to the regional complications of our national situation. These suggestions fall into two main groups: (1) those made by persons who have given up hope of democratic solutions and are interested in a strictly functional economic and social order; and (2) the suggestions of those who, still believing in the possibilities of democracy, would adapt the present forms of government to regional ends.

The Functionalist would bring all regionalisms rudely to heel with the lash of a dictatorial whip. Inevitably, he is an advocate of a planned economy if not of a planned society, and therefore is strongly socialistic, is likely to be Communist or perhaps Fascist. Always he professes ardent belief in regionalism, but upon examination turns out to be interested only in bringing about a perfectly neat and scientific adaptation of function to environment within a closed and regimented national economy. For the loose political groupings here called regions – more properly called sections by Turner – he has little use, since he often does not know history and never respects it, and has no zest for traditions and cultures with their quite imponderable values. His principle of regional division would work on a basis of pure economic determinism. He would dissolve all old political boundaries, if necessary, to secure efficient production units within areas adapted to management by collectivized agencies – or corporate ones.

Under a Functional regionalism, the growing of cotton would be permitted only in regions like Texas and the Delta of Mississippi, which are suited to mechanical, large-scale cultivation. Vermont farmers might be allowed to continue their production of maple sugar, hay, and milk, but would not be allowed to raise hogs, since Vermont is not a corn region and hogs are most efficiently raised in close proximity to corn. All cotton mills would be moved South, near the cotton, and all woolen mills would be placed in scientific relation to sheep, say, near Western sheep ranches. Mining regions would mine, but could never raise sheep on the side. Regions would thus specialize far more than they do now, but they would not be at liberty to choose their specialties or to deviate from them. The Planning Commission would regulate all.

Such a regionalism is not American. It belongs to Russia and other home-lands of the totalitarian state. If American institutions should collapse, it might be enforced upon us. Yet even then it could hardly hope to succeed. It contradicts the prime force that has made the regions – their tendency, over and above economic specializations, to become autonomous units possessing whole cultures of their own, which often embody choices not economic at all.

Between the Functionalist kind of regionalism and the Democratic kind which links up with a revived Federalism lies a debatable ground occupied at present by a Rooseveltian experiment: the TVA. The Tennessee Valley adventure in "regional planning" is a strange hybrid creation. Born by Federal enactment and therefore an agent of the Federal government, it is nevertheless a "corporation", operating within a physiographic, "functional" region that overlaps several political and so-called sovereign states; but it is subject to no direction by all or any of those states and is not even hospitable, as its "authority" has made plain, to so much, even, as their influence and friendly interest. The states concerned (that is, nearly all the western South) can exert control only by indirect partisan pressure or through the tedious roundabout method of Congressional legislation. Under a true Federalism, the TVA would be administered, with the help of Federal appropriations, by the region concerned. It would thus escape the batterings of criticism it now receives from regions less favored by the Federal government and from states which must impotently watch the manipulation of their resources and population by a paternal and "foreign" agency. As it stands, the TVA is an irresponsible projection of a planned, functional society into the midst of one of the most thoroughly democratic parts of the United States. It therefore does not guide us very far in our search for the right kind of regionalism. Like some other devices of the Roosevelt administration, it suggests an unwillingness to discover the foundation upon which building may be permanent. Whether its design represents ignorance of American law, history, and circumstance, combined with wishful yearning toward a planned society, or a deliberate flouting of these things, I do not know. At any rate, it now perverts to some degree by holding out promises that may not be possible of fulfillment.

When we come to democratic suggestions, we see at once that they divide into two groups: those that may be undertaken within the present framework of the Constitution, and those that require amendment or even sweeping revision of the constitutional fabric.

Under the first head come inter-state compacts, of which seventy have already been approved by Congress. Such compacts have been the subject of elaborate study by political scientists. They seem to be useful in special instances, as in the establishment of the Port of New York Authority. They do not help the general problem of the relation between regions and nation, since they touch only local issues and are likely to be attempted only under specially favorable circumstances.

A realignment or coalescence of states into regional groups seems legally possible under Article IV, Section 3, of the Constitution, which, though negatively worded, allows "states" to be formed "by the junction of two or more States, or parts of States", if their legislatures and Congress consent. Yet such coalescence, even if consented to by legislatures willing to vote themselves out of existence, would be nothing more than the substitution of a larger territorial state for several smaller ones. Unless accompanied by changes in representation to compensate for the loss of power in the Senate, this device would not fit regional needs. Besides, coalescence is unlikely. States have split; they have never joined.

A third possibility is in Federal administration itself. The Federal Reserve System, the decentralization of bureaus, the recent proposal to establish "little capitals" are all of this order. Such steps, though symptomatic of the unwieldiness of our Federal government and its lack of regional foothold, must be put down as largely improvements in the sheer efficiency of the Federal mechanism. They could easily be turned to make centralization more effective than it is. In the hands of regional imperialism they would be powerful weapons.

There remain the suggestions for regional reform which imply constitutional alterations. Here at last we arrive on the ground of a New Federalism. The Old Federalism, with its outright prohibitions against treaties, alliances, and confederations among the several states, and its rigidity in other respects, neither safeguards us against regional imperialism, nor cherishes regional autonomy, nor allows for any change except it be made by constitutional amendment. No means, therefore, is left but to operate upon the historic document itself.

From many quarters have come suggestions for the establishment of regional governments, either to replace the states as seats of local government or to intervene between the states and the Federal government. Most of the authors of these suggestions, while enthusiastic enough in drawing the outlines of the regional map, are not very specific in indicating how the reform is to be achieved; and, still worse, they generally fail to accompany their studies with any philosophy of the relation between Federalism and regionalism. Since they rarely go beyond suggesting constitutional amendment as the means of reform, they cannot be blamed for a certain vagueness. A constitutional amendment to cover the situation would have to embody details and complications to an extent unknown in our experience. For that reason if for no other it could be drawn up only with the greatest difficulty, and would be ratified with even greater difficulty.

In his recent book, *The Need for Constitutional Reform*, Mr. W. Y. Elliott puts the situation in a very different light. He advocates a system of regional commonwealths to replace the states as members of the Federal organism. His map of regional divisions, while retaining as entities a few states, like New York, that are deemed already regions in themselves, would otherwise fix upon groups of states that have natural affiliations: New England, the South Atlantic seaboard, the lower Mississippi Valley, the Pacific Coast, and so on – with, it should be noted, a leaning toward small, economically related groupings, rather than toward large sections like the Old South.

These regional commonwealths would have unicameral legislatures of their own. The states within them would drop to the condition of administrative units, remain, like the English counties, "rich depositories of historical associations". Like the provinces of Canada, the regional commonwealths would be charged with the execution of Federal laws. They would be represented in a national House of Representatives on the basis of population.

This precise and statesmanlike outline differs from most other schemes in making the erection of regional commonwealths only one feature, if a necessary and integral feature, of a general process of constitutional reform, the object of which is to secure a genuine Federalism. This reform, undertaken in the spirit of Madison and the Fathers, is to affect all departments. The President is to be made stronger and more responsible, with power to dissolve Congress during his term and make it stand an election. The composition of the Senate is to be changed; some of its power is to be taken away, and it is to be returned to the status originally intended for it, as "a body of elder statesmen", who will revise and supervise, not direct. The power of the Federal Judiciary to control "social policy" will be taken away. The Civil Service will be reorganized along British lines.

Such drastic revisions, of course, would require nothing less than a constitutional convention. But if Caesarism is to be checked, Mr. Elliott thinks a convention an immediate necessity. The true enemies of the Constitution, he rightly thinks, are its "stand-pat friends". The true friends are those who would save it from destruction by the Caesars or the Lenins by revision before it is too late.

Whatever else may be said of this bold and well-argued proposal, there is no doubt that it quickens our minds, as other schemes do not, with a sense of possible and statesmanlike achievement rather than dulls us with a cynical yielding to the grind of abstract force and blind accident. If the Constitution is to be rewritten, the drafting must be done by men who, like the Fathers of the original Constitution, believe in the power of humanity over circumstance, and can bring to the task of constitution-making something more than the statistical and technical knowledge of the modern expert, and a great deal more than the sleek political knowingness which is the average American politician's substitute for statesmanship. The task requires men who are, as Madison and his colleagues were, at once lawyers, philosophers, students of history, men of letters, and men of the world, and who have the "feel" of the American situation as well as acquaintance with theory. The spirit, if not the letter, of Mr. Elliott's plan would indicate that he is of such a company; and if there are enough determined souls of the same fibre in America, even though they be few in comparison with politicians and lobbyists, they *can* attempt the task of constitution-making, and it is their sacred duty to contend for the privilege and right of doing so.

Nevertheless, attractive as Mr. Elliott's plan is, the description I have given of the course of regional imperialism indicates its defects. As one reads, he suspects that Mr. Elliott is less interested in regionalism *per se* than in remedying weaknesses in the national government. He wants a *strong* national government, provided it is also a responsible one, as the present one is not, and he concedes regional commonwealths as a better basic unit than states. If we can get regional reform in no other way, let it come in Mr. Elliott's way. But under this strong government, however responsible, however more truly Federal, what would prevent the old regional combinations from being made once more? What would forestall a renewed growth of regional imperialism and its use of the Federal power, now made stronger than ever, to handicap or crush a dissenting region, left in a solid minority as the South long has been – as the Northeast may now conceivably be left.

Mr. Elliott's plan offers no safeguard against such an event. He hardly does more than recognize the problem with a single, casual, passing phrase about "sectional compromise". With his eye fearfully alert against possibilities of Caesarism in the form of personal or corporate dictatorship, he still forgets the other possibility – equally ruinous to true Federalism – that a region, behind a Federal mask, may also play the role of Caesar.

If regional commonwealths are to serve as the basis of a new Federalism, then we must provide against that contingency. And if a constitutional convention is in order, then the task of devising the right safeguard would be a very proper task for it to under-take – perhaps, ultimately, the most important task of all, since on its successful accomplishment might hang the decision as to whether the United States will fly apart in angry contest or be bound under the levelling and militant Caesarism that Mr. Elliott fears or, escaping these disasters, achieve the kind of national union which, if not more perfect, still suits American traditions and realities.

It would be immodest for a layman to make the positive suggestions that ought to come from the trained student of government. The layman cannot do much more than show what is to be safeguarded, and against what.

The regions need a safeguard against imperialism at two points: first in their economic pursuits, since on these they depend for the security which, in Mr. Elliott's opinion, Americans now desire more passionately than equality; and second, in their cultural and social institutions, which, in the South especially, have suffered from outside domination.

The "greatest free trade area in the world" needs not only to be "decentralized" (for decentralization alone is not enough) but also subdivided in the interest of regional reciprocity. There must be boundaries which the exploiting agents will pass only under difficulty and not without penalty if they come on missions of exploitation. Under the letter of the present Federal law no discrimination is supposed to occur; but the existence of regions with diverse cultures actually gives full legal standing to the enormous advantage, amounting to a right of conquest, which an imperializing region holds over the others. We need a lawful means of abolishing this covert discrimination. Perhaps it can be devised only by making it lawful for regions openly to discriminate where just cause appears. To distribute a Federal bounty, subtracted from prosperous regions for the benefit of the disadvantaged, is probably not a fair, adequate, or permanently workable method. The suggestion of Mr. Frank L. Owsley, in "The Pillars of Agrarianism",* that "the several regions should have an equal share in the making of the tariff, which would be in the form of a treaty or agreement between all the sections, somewhat in the fashion of the late Austro-Hungarian tariff treaties" represents the kind of privilege that the regions desperately need. More than that, it comes closer than any other suggestion I have seen to indicating the structural principle of a really national policy in such matters as the tariff.

Mr. Owsley does not ask for "inter-regional tariffs", except in the sense that, "if the South should have a lower tariff than the other regions, goods imported through the South would have to pay an extra duty on entering the other regions operating under the treaty".

But what if more safeguard is needed? The means of full protection lies perhaps – the layman can venture only a *perhaps* – in giving the regional commonwealths power to tax the agencies that would despoil them. Power to tax or at least to regulate "foreign" capital and enterprises that attempt national monopoly; power, it may be, to control to some degree credit and even money; power to safeguard educational systems against the rule of external interests and of propaganda aimed at the very life of regional cultures; power for the South to preserve its bi-racial social system without the furtive evasion or raw violence to which it is now driven when sniped at with weapons of Federal legality; power for the Far West and the Southwest to do likewise with their own race problems; power for the Middle West and the Deep South to curtail or prevent the absentee ownership of their farm lands by Wall Street speculators or by their own expatriates, retired to the luxury of Pasadena and Los Angeles; and power for the Northeast, if it so wishes, to protect its union labor against Southern cheap labor. For there must be full reciprocity, and powers allowed to one region must be allowed to all. *That* point must be clear. The man is no patriot who would regard such measures as retaliatory – who would want to see the Northeast crushed and penalized, like the South seventy years ago, and left an impotent and uncontributing part of the nation. In the attempt to right the balance we should not end by upsetting it, and, recalling Burke's great saying about not drawing an indictment against a whole people, we should remember gallantries and beneficences as well as errors. Yet the Northeast should do well to realize that there are people with a burning sense of wrong who wish retaliation, and would inflict it if the turn of events under the Old Federalism should permit – yes, and would cheerfully take the risk of any injurious recoil upon themselves.

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* THE AMERICAN REVIEW, March, 1935.

If power to tax and regulate is too dangerous a power for regional governments to possess, then what other measure, guaranteed not to do harm, is available? Shall the regional commonwealths be given a veto power in certain instances, some modern equivalent of Calhoun's principle of nullification? That is worth considering. But at any rate, devices and powers of the kind enumerated, added to the New Federalism described by Mr. Elliott, would give our political institutions an organic relation to our national life. Yet who, whether layman or expert, seeing how event follows upon event, upsetting calculation, will refuse to admit that his gravest calculations will not look ridiculous next month, or next year? Knowing this, the provident calculator must label his suggestion as the railroad labels its train schedules: *Subject to change without notice!*

But though the suggestion may change, the analysis of the situation will not change very soon, for the conditions described are too deeply rooted in American life to be altered with every passing circumstance. And the suggestions given, though speculative as to details, are firm enough in purpose and certain enough in direction to mark a road of exploration.

Beyond all early prospect of change, too, is a principle which may well have the final place in this discussion. If followed out in American life, it would of itself eliminate much of the necessity for new mechanisms of government. It has two parts, which might be thus stated: first, it is the nature of industrial enterprise, corporate monopoly, and high finance to devour, to exploit, to imperialize; and a region which specializes in these functions is by that fact driven to engage in imperial conquest of one sort or another; second, it is the nature of small business, well-distributed property, and an agrarian regime to stay at home and be content with modest returns. The region that specializes in these things, or that balances them with its industry in fair proportions, is a good neighbor, not desiring conquest. Whatever restores small property, fosters agrarianism, and curtails exaggerated industrialism is on the side of regional autonomy. If we had a fair balance of this sort in America, it is possible that the Old Federalism, with very small changes, would suffice our modern purposes.

But, so firmly intrenched is the ancient enemy of all good balance, it is possible that regionalism must be called in as one of the means of dislodging him. If a given region is too hard pressed, if it is denied recourse, if it is irritated by an assumption of superior piety, then regionalists will think of the old watchword, independence. Independence, signifying as it does the end of colonialism, is a sacred word in American history. Among other things, it means that the land and the region belong to the people who dwell there, and that they will be governed only by their own consent.

The Christianity of Modernism

CLEANTH BROOKS, JR.

THE war between science and religion is over. Perhaps it was an unnecessary war – perhaps it need never have been fought. In any case, the proponents of religion have been defeated; they have been worse than defeated; they have been converted.

In saying this, I am not underestimating the present strength of Fundamentalism. It is still strong. But its strength is located predominantly in rural areas and is bound up with an older generation. The intellectual leaders of Protestantism, almost to a man, are not Fundamentalists; and Fundamentalism, deprived of leaders, it is safe to predict, will not be able to survive the present intellectual climate.

One can be, and perhaps should be, thoroughly sympathetic with the Liberal Protestant in his unconscious capitulation to the enemy. As a man and as a citizen, he has coveted intercourse with other intellectuals. He has naturally found the cruder aspects of Fundamentalism repugnant. Moreover, he has become acutely conscious of the hiatus existing between the dominant interests of modern America and specifically religious interests. At his best, therefore, he has repudiated the close alliance between the Church and the *status quo*. I am not forgetting that many of his brother Protestants still repose in a sturdy unconsciousness of any discrepancies existing between a Christian civilization and Mr. Hoover's enlightened American capitalism. But the number of Protestant leaders who have broken with the *status quo* is much larger than most people believe, and it is growing larger. And it is with this group – a group which contains not only the intellectuals but many of the most sincere spirits – that the future of American Protestantism rests.

The Liberal Protestant's repudiation of Fundamentalism on the one hand and of the *status quo* on the other ought to allow us to see his religion itself in some purity, naked and unencumbered. And what one sees immediately raises the question: can Protestantism possibly survive another reformation without becoming reformed out of existence – that is, reformed out of existence as a religion? This last reformation has indeed come very close to leaving the Liberal Protestant up in the air. His position has thus far been primarily negative: in theology, emphasis on accommodating religion to science; in ethics, emphasis on a radical criticism of the present-day economic system. And as between the two, morals have been much more heavily emphasized than metaphysics. Sermons and articles are full of this sort of thing: "some other set of economic ideals which will be more Christian", "if necessary, Capitalism must be radically modified", "is Communism consonant with Christianity?"

As the position becomes more positive, it tends toward a Christian socialism or communism, though here again it is vague. And it is the *religious* element that is vague – the relation of Christianity to the secular and temporal political program. If pressure is applied, one may predict that the Christian element will make room for the Communistic. The sociological aspect of Christianity seems, to Liberal Protestants, to fit rather easily into the Communistic scheme. But Christianity has historically included much more than a sociology. And if Christianity and Communism seem to square easily with each other in their concern for the oppressed and exploited, an examination of the Pronouncements of Liberal Protestantism will reveal very frail defences against non-Christian attitudes on other relationships. For present-day Protestantism is so far secularized already that it would under pressure be rather easily forced into the rest of the pattern. One may sum up as follows: in Protestantism's emphasis on the social gospel, in its regenerated zeal and earnestness about the conditions in which men live, is it proposing to carry out a Christian program, or has it, under the influence of our contemporary scientific climate, become merely a socio-political program? The question is a serious one and it is asked seriously out of a great deal of respect for the sincerity of those religious leaders who have had to brave the disfavor of their wealthy, big-business parishioners.

An answer to this question involves, of course, a definition of religion and implies a particular position on the relation of religion to science. Perhaps it is best to indicate briefly and rapidly what the writer's position on that matter is; for, however obvious the following propositions may be, Liberal Protestantism is not acting upon a realization of them. Clarity as well as honesty dictates a brief exposition of the point.

In the first place, science cannot prove its underlying assumptions. They must be, literally, *assumed*. And in the second place, science has nothing to say about values. Science always prefaces its prescriptions with an *if*: *if* you want this result, then take this means. Science is quite properly technician-in-chief to civilization: it defines the means to be employed for the attainment of various objectives. But it cannot be the pilot. It cannot – as science – name the objectives. That is the function of religion, if religion is to have any function at all. And religion may be roughly defined – one aspect of it at least – as that system of basic values which underlies a civilization.

Liberal Protestantism, however, in its anxiety to live amicably with science, has schooled itself upon a scientific discipline almost exclusively. The discipline is ultimately inapplicable to religion and has worked it much positive injury. That injury can perhaps be most clearly displayed by contrasting the scientific discipline with the discipline of art, a discipline to which Protestantism is historically antipathetic, and which the typical Liberal Protestant pastor lacks.

I prefer to contrast art with science rather than merely religion with science for a particular reason. The qualities which art shares with religion are just those which Liberal Protestantism through its imitation of science has lost. For the Protestant reader, a contrast between religion and science may be neither clear nor emphatic. To say that Protestantism has so far lost its conception of religion that it is difficult to make it understand what it has lost is perhaps the most cruel thing that one could say about it. But I am availing myself of the privileges of a Protestant (perhaps to the limit) in speaking out on these matters; and I am serious; and I want to be understood.

In using the term *art*, I am perhaps inviting misconceptions. I obviously do not mean by *art* empty and frivolous decoration. My criticism of Protestantism is not that it lacks a properly restful ritual or a tasteful church architecture. I am using *art* in the sense of a description of experience which is concrete where that of science is abstract, many-sided where that of science is necessarily one-sided, and which involves the whole personality where science only involves one part, the intellect. These are qualities which are essential to worship, and a religion without worship is an anomaly. It deserves – if only to keep the issues clear – another name. Religion is obviously more than art. A religion is anchored to certain supreme values, values which it affirms are eternal, not merely to be accepted for the moment through a "willing suspension of disbelief". But a religion which lacks the element of art is hardly a religion at all.

The injury done by the prevailing scientific discipline reveals itself ominously in many a Liberal sermon. In the first place, science attempts an intellectual exposition. This can never be purely intellectual, of course, but complete purity is its goal. The argument is convincing in so far as the scientist can clear himself of all emotional factors, all value considerations, all that might make the conclusion arrived at personally attractive to him. The sermon cannot properly avail itself of such conditions, and yet the typical liberal sermon often forces itself into just such a structure. It amounts to a lecture. It reveals a religion truncated in the direction of science.

In the second place, science attempts to conquer new areas for truth, consolidate its gains, and then move on to the conquest of further areas. Science is not only abstract but progressive. But if the Christian affirmations are in any sense eternal (qualify the term as you will), they are not points to be abandoned in favor of new truth, new discoveries. "The Search for God" is all very well for a party of religious explorers; it hardly does for a Church which maintains that it has found Him.

If there is to be a search at all, it will have to be a search in something of the sense in which the poet explores himself in relation to the truth, pondering over it, relating it to various sets of conditions, but returning to it and working back to it as to a center rather than regarding it as a point on a line along which he continually advances. Here again Liberal Protestantism finds itself in a quandary. Granting acceptance of the truth, what does it have to give? For the sinner, one may assume that it does have something. To the average congregation of "converted" it often finds itself with nothing further to offer. And this is perhaps the explanation for the Liberal Protestant pastor's offering book reviews, current events, sociology, etc. – more often than you would think – in lieu of worship.

In the third place, and of course most important, science is man-centered and "practical". Bertrand Russell is right, ultimately, in calling science "power-knowledge". And it is power-knowledge, of course, because it has Man as its point of reference. It puts the handle into his hands so that he can *use* its information. If religion is a knowing also, a set of information, it is hardly information in this sense. It cannot be put to use – not in the sense in which science can be. And religion, again like art, is not man-centered in the same sense in which science is. To illustrate from art, the artist attempts something of a rapprochement with the universe outside him. Laying aside the practical motive, he tries to bring his interests into terms with larger, more universal interests.

Liberal Protestantism, on the basis of the books and articles which its leaders produce and the sermons which they preach, is pretty thoroughly man-centered, as a matter of emphasis at least. The fatherhood of God, one feels, is no longer the correlative of the brotherhood of man. The brotherhood of man tends to become an exclusive end in itself. There is little wonder that the most positive affirmation which Liberal Protestantism can make is apt to be some form of socialism.

One may illustrate this matter from *The Christian Century*, again expressing all sympathy for it and a good deal of thoroughly well-deserved praise. It is the strongest and most admirable of the Liberal Protestant publications, but as the strongest, it sets forth in itself cruelly the fundamental weakness of the group it represents.

Its views on economics, politics, and related matters are honest, forthright, and full. On these topics it resembles, and compares very favorably with, *The New Republic* and *The Nation*. It refuses to be lulled into a belief that the prevailing order is Christian in any but a nominal sense, and it criticizes affairs, domestic and foreign, vigorously and fearlessly.

But the poetry which it publishes is very weak, and its reviews of literary works are weak also. The poetry (though it often wears a modern veneer) is for the most part full of easy moralization, sentimental prettification, and over-simplified propaganda. The revival of interest in the great religious poetry of England in the seventeenth century leaves the poetry of this weekly untouched — there are not even any crude imitations.

The point is not that Liberal Protestantism lacks new and up-to-date poems to quote in its Sunday morning sermons. If this were all, the matter would be a thoroughly superficial one. The fundamental point is this: religionists who can be satisfied with poor religious poetry can hardly have a very rich and complex worship. The weakness in poetry points to and helps explain a corresponding weakness in theology. I am not trying to force a choice of extremes here. I am not asking that Protestantism become Buddhistic in meditation and self-examination. Rather, I am pointing out that in so far as *The Christian Century* mirrors a group, that group is already far along the road to secularization. Where one's interests lie, to paraphrase the Scriptures, there lies one's heart also. And judged by *The Christian Century*, the hearts of the leaders of Liberal Protestantism lie in the realm of temporal affairs.

This is, of course, the fundamental explanation of the rise of the liturgical religions in the last decades. After discounting the cases of snobbery and the cases of those who wish to retreat from a disagreeable world into the peace of a beautiful aestheticism, the liturgical religions have something to give which advanced Protestantism would do well to cultivate if it expects to remain a religion at all.

Communism sets out to provide creature comforts, luxuries, and, more than that, leisure in which man may presumably develop his mind and aesthetic faculties. It provides them at a price of course. But in proportion as Protestantism becomes a mere humanitarianism (or by emphasis a humanitarianism) it will have less and less to disagree with in such a program, less and less to offer in addition to such a program, and even if it maintains its reservations, in a time of crisis those scruples will be entirely too flimsy to stand. To repeat what has been said earlier in this essay, the real issue comes down to this: if the Christian values are *true*, if they are worth adhering to, shall they determine the civilization; or shall the economic order into which we drift determine our values by allowing to us whatever values such an economic order will permit?

Obviously, the modern world of finance capitalism does not represent a Christian civilization; but is the movement to the left the only alternative? And if the Church has in the past compromised often and shamefully, does not a rapprochement with the left involve its compromises too? This last question may be given point by quoting from the conclusion of a recent article in *The Christian Century* entitled "Must Christians Reject Communism?" The author there outlines "the foundations of a social philosophy" on which Communism and Christianity might agree:

> 1. The only forces which work any real change in politics or economics are the result of organizing the interests of some group and making them effective.
>
> 2. The change we want — a reintegration of society on a higher level — can be accomplished only by organizing the interests of a majority group.

3. The issue as to whether this can be done effectively rests with man — or rather with God — that curious power which only man seems to possess of consciously realizing his situation and molding it nearer to his desire.

The last sentence is particularly revealing. That curious power of molding situations to man's desire would seem to be science, not the Christian God, though perhaps the Communist God. The author concludes by stating that the Christian in accepting Communism "need not sacrifice his Christianity, for that in its pure form has always promised that one day the lowly will be exalted and the proud and powerful brought down".

The phrase, "in its pure form", obviously begs the question. The pure form is arrived at by a selection which involves disregarding among other things the statement that "My kingdom is not of this world." The old, troubled questioning, Why did God make man capable of sin and evil, returns here, not in the form of anguished complaint, but as an affirmation: now that we have the technical power, we will make sin impossible.

The article is a rather extreme but representative enough example of Protestantism secularizing itself out of existence — becoming conformed to this world. If the Christian assumptions are valid, then the Christian theologian and pastor, whatever the world may think, can hardly have a more important vocation. If, on the other hand, the Protestant Liberals are merely humanitarians in search of a creed, then they are perhaps right, but they are hardly Christian in any historical sense of the term, and intellectual honesty calls for the admission of the fact.

The tendency to the left is apparently honest and courageous. I do not propose to inveigh against it on either of these grounds. But I do not believe that it holds the hope of a Christian civilization in any strict sense of the term. It is all very well for Protestantism to become commendably zealous in rendering unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; but in its zeal it has come very close to slighting God. And the Liberal Protestant perhaps needs to be reminded that the followers of Marx will be quite as jealous in claiming their dues as Caesar himself.

Unless Liberal Protestantism is prepared to be a religion, it is a superfluity and had better allow itself to be absorbed into one of the movements which puts the material well-being of man first, willing to implement this through collectivization, the liquidation of certain classes, and whatever else may be necessary. But perhaps enough has been said in the preceding pages to indicate that a religion may be necessary and inevitable after all; that civilizations are founded, not on ethical societies, but on religions; and that Communism itself is in this sense a religion, though one of the materialistic religions and one of the religions of Man, burdened with the infirmities of both. The promise of Communism to realize itself in practice rests, indeed, on the fact that it is a religion; that is, that it makes a claim to authority, that it can claim emotional allegiance, and that it has a world view. Christians who hope to short-cut to the promised land via Communism will find themselves badly fooled. Without its non-Christian elements, Communism would carry as little hope for fulfillment of its promises as does Liberal Christianity.

It would be a heartening sight if Liberal Protestantism could get over its sense of inferiority, could abandon its attempt to keep up with the Millikans and Jeanses and Marxes, and could attempt to realize its basic function, that of a religion. This would not necessitate a return to the crudities of Fundamentalism, unless one believes, in an age of relativities, than belief in an absolute is crude. It would not necessitate the suppression of the social gospel, though it would involve deciding what sort of social gospel is Christian and what is not. It would not demand cessation of a radical criticism of the present economic order, though it would involve relating that criticism to a positive conception of a Christian society.

I am not certain that Protestantism has such a rally as this in it. If it has, probably the greatest obstacle it will have to overcome is the all-pervading economic determinism embedded in such a phrase as "You can't turn back the clock." For the movements which seem to me to have most hope for realizing a Christian order will probably bear this stigma. They involve, on the political and economic side, the giving meaning to the sacredness of human personality and to the freedom of the will by restoring property. The proposal may sound Quixotic to the modern mind. But this is a measure of the seriousness of the problem. If Liberal Protestantism has so much acquired the modern mind, if it has become so much infected with economic determinism, that it has lost its belief in the freedom of the will, then the case is hopeless indeed.

Property and Tactics

Part II

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

THE first article of this series* criticized the means used or proposed by Belloc and Chesterton for promoting small property, concluding that attacks upon the present social order and mere denunciation of the rich were likely to promote not distributism but communism. Since G. K. C.'s reply (in his *Weekly*) has not yet fully come to hand, the present article will not deal with it but will consider how the existing proletarian masses might be reduced.

The program proposed is simple: prohibit usury and enforce the Just Price. It is also practical, for it can point to mediaeval society as an example of success in the past. Nor does it involve revolutionary agitation which sensible men are determined to end.

Let us begin with usury as simpler than the Just Price and therefore capable of being dealt with more promptly.

At the outset we must define our terms. In common usage today usury means interest higher than the rate locally permitted by the civil law. In New York State today the legal rate is six per cent on loans to individuals; lenders to corporations may charge as much as the borrower is willing to pay. This meaning is purely modern, and like most purely modern ideas has broken down in practice.

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* THE AMERICAN REVIEW, October, 1935.

The earlier and broader meaning was defined by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 as follows: usury is the charging of any interest whatsoever upon an economically unproductive loan — of which the classical instances were loans for building churches and waging wars — or the charging of such high interest on a productive loan as to destroy the productivity of that loan to the borrower. If you took away all the borrower's profit under the guise of interest you were a usurer.

The term interest as distinguished from usury originated in an error typical of the late-mediaeval scholastic philosophers. They said: here is a fellow with money to invest. He can put it into some enterprise from which, given the conditions of the time and place, he may fairly expect a certain percentage of profit. On the other hand, should he lend this money, he must forego the profit which he would have made had he used the money commercially. Therefore, said the late-mediaeval canonist, it is just that lenders should charge and borrowers should pay a part of the profit which the lender would have made on a commercial investment. Since lenders can legally seize the goods of defaulting borrowers, the profits of money-lending are more certain than those of business ventures, and it would therefore be wrong for lenders to charge borrowers the full profit which they might have made by investment. Nevertheless it is fair for them to charge an intermediate rate representing a part of that profit, in Latin "*ea quod interest* — that which is between". Hence our word interest.

It has taken the modern world a long time to find the flaw in this late-mediaeval argument. And yet as late as the seventeenth century Francis Bacon, a man intermediate between the mediaeval and the modern world, saw the point clearly. In his essay "Of Usury" he wrote: "For the usurer being at certainties and all others at uncertainties, at the end of the game most of the money will be in the box." In other words, usury is a device for concentrating wealth in the hands of usurers.

Taking the word usury in the old and full sense of unearned interest, its injustice and its inevitable breakdown in the long run can be shown either by abstract arguments or by the colossal object lesson now before the world.

The favorite traditional argument was that of itself money does not breed money. Whereas animals can and will reproduce their kind so that an owner of beasts has a right to their natural increase, the productivity of money is no part of its nature but depends entirely upon the use to which it is put. Mere tokens, bits of metal, or paper, or what-not, cannot have children. Of themselves they are of no use to man as land or buildings are. All the money in the world would not keep its owner from starving or freezing if he were alone in a wilderness. Its power of demand over goods and services, which is its value, is purely conventional, founded upon its immense convenience as a means of exchange. The usurious idea that any loan has a right to interest is therefore unnatural.

Besides being unnatural, usury is absurd. This is merely a matter of arithmetic. Suppose an English ha'penny or a sum equal to an American cent had been lent at four per cent interest three hundred years ago, that the interest had been regularly paid, and the lender had "compounded" the interest by lending it also at the same rate at the end of each year. In a hundred years the sum would have multiplied by more than fifty, in two hundred years by more than two thousand five hundred, in three hundred years by nearly a hundred and twenty-nine thousand!

Since usury is both unnatural and absurd, why did it not sooner break down in practice? The historical inquiry is limited to the ancient Roman Empire and to modern Christendom because practically all other societies known to history knew what usury is, forbade it, drove it under ground, and limited it by every means in their power. Rome tolerated it, and that toleration was a chief cause of the gradual decay of ancient civilization falsely called the "fall" of the Roman Empire. Modern usury is not much more than nine or ten generations old, its full development is much more recent. Calvin, the first Christian theologian to defend it, died in 1564. In his *Essays*, published in 1597, Francis Bacon, a man who welcomed novelty, in his utilitarian materialism one of the founders of modernism, but nevertheless one who understood and valued much of traditional wisdom, Bacon, I say, gravely doubted whether usury were good or no. The great Bank of Amsterdam was not founded until 1609, the Bank of England not until 1694, the first Bank of New York only in 1799.

Usury survived without general disaster only because of the age of expansion. For more than three centuries until our own time that expansion was both extensive and intensive: extensive through the settlement of new, previously empty countries, intensive through continually increasing command over material nature thanks to "science". The two combined to increase aggregate wealth enormously. The extensive process, the pioneering and developing of the new countries, also provided a social safety valve. Men with little capital except healthy bodies and stout hearts might become rich and were sure of personal independence on free land at or near the frontier. Under these exceptional conditions the gilded ship of usury long enjoyed fair winds and smooth seas.

Even so, that ship was unseaworthy and careened badly to any cross-puff of wind. The rate of expansion was jagged, and each sharp depression was both painful and dangerous. In all human affairs there must always be some rhythm, up and down, but usury makes steeper every rise and fall of economic activity. Booms are increased because lenders who will have a legal title to both principal and interest, whether the latter be earned or not, will be less cautious in lending; slumps are made worse because debtors lose their property which is then thrown on the market to be sold for what it will fetch, thus depressing all values. When prices fall, a producer not subject to debt at usurious interest can usually scratch along somehow; under usury he is wiped out. The nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries were full of such disasters, but in each case the rapid increase in real wealth – due to the age of expansion – took up the slack.

Since 1914, however, the narrowing of the frontier, slowing down the rate of extensive expansion, has combined with the colossally usurious war loans and the lavish American lending of the post-War boom to bring about such a carnival of repudiation as the world has never seen. To say this is by no means to justify the European defaulters. Since everywhere the War was financed usuriously by internal as well as international loans, the European Allies had no right to saddle extra burdens upon the American taxpayer except upon the untenable assumption that they had been unselfishly fighting for American interests before the United States declared war. Let us content ourselves with noting the immensity of the repudiation. Not only have the promises of the Allies to America been broken, the holders of Russian and German war bonds have been wiped out, while most of the value has been taken from the bonds of the European Allies. If you will add to all this the post-War repudiations in Europe and the two Americas, you will begin to understand what has happened. If there are still people who doubt whether repudiation was necessary, one can only wonder what planet these doubters have been inhabiting.

Yet the moral of this colossal and earth-shaking object lesson, together with all the repudiations of the last hundred years, has passed almost unnoticed. When John Maynard Keynes truly called the British war debt to America usurious, there was no indication whatsoever of his conversion to the principle involved. For want of evidence to the contrary leaves one free to believe that he merely thought any stick good enough to beat the American dog with. There have been other isolated voices. As far back as the nineties an American eccentric nicknamed "Coin" Harvey — some of whose other more doubtful ideas influenced

Bryan — partly saw what usury was. In our own day the professional wit, Will Rogers, once jested against it as follows:

> It's not supply and demand, it's old man interest that's got the world by the ears.
>
> What would be the matter with this for relieving practically everybody's "depression"—just call all debts off? There can't be over a dozen men in the world that are owed more than they owe, so you wouldn't be hurting very many, and besides if you do give them some worry that's what they had everybody else doing for years. This would give great temporary relief to 99 per cent and wouldn't hurt the others long for they would soon have it back again.

Let us particularly note Rogers' last words "they would soon have it back again". Leave usury intact and it will concentrate property no matter what else you may do. Reduce interest rates and you slow down the process without changing its nature. Cancel all debts, kill all creditors if you like; if your law will enforce an unearned tribute on money lent, the weary game will begin all over again.

Can a practical remedy for usury be found? Differing with Belloc, the present writer answers yes. Certain American railroads used to issue bonds with "interest if earned only". There seems no reason why the law should go on enforcing the payment of unearned interest if only the law-making body decided to change. Whether a sufficient body of opinion could be converted so as to desire the change and to support it when made is another matter. But there is nothing to prevent any sovereign state from saying: "Henceforward no bonds providing for unearned interest shall be issued within our territory, nor will we any longer compel the payment of such interest on bonds hereafter issued outside our territory." Of course there would be borderline cases in which the courts would have to decide whether interest had been really earned or no; such cases arise out of every law under the sun.

To bring about the enactment of such a law, opinion would first have to be prepared. The question of what people and how many would have to be converted to the truth about usury before anything could be done, would be answered differently according to the constitution of the state itself. In a dictatorial country for instance it would be enough to convince the dictator. In any case the vast influence of the banks would be hostile. They would fight for their lives, or what they would think to be their lives, using all forms of "propaganda" to misrepresent the issue. Against this, however, could be set the living forces of truth and conviction. Once any reasonably intelligent person has had the truth about usury explained to him he will not soon forget it. Moreover the innumerable victims of usury have influence. None of the arguments in favor of unearned interest touches the heart of the matter. It is idle to repeat that, since most loans are productive, it is waste of time to ask whether any given loan be so or not, or to say that anything which would dry up credit would reduce the standard of living. The obvious answer would be that opponents of usury were out to strengthen sound credit by pruning out the unsound.

Certain points of expediency would need watching. The country which first undertook to put down usury might not have to fear armed attack such as the English invasion of Egypt in 1882 to insure payment of the Khedive's bonded debt. But such a country would do well to be strong enough to resist whatever forms of pressure might be attempted by other countries where bankers still controlled government. Again, an anti-usurious country might be handicapped in war through having denied itself the power to float interest-bearing war loans. Also the transition from a get-rich-quick economy, alternately swollen by excessive credit and punctured by disaster, to more secure and stable arrangements would have to be supported by workers and savers as against speculators.

To mention speculators is to approach the second part of our subject, the Just Price.

That there is injustice to consumers in charging too high a price for a thing and to producers in throwing things on the market too cheap is an idea as old as society and which will remain while society endures. Everyone has had occasion to say: "I paid too much for this or that because I had to have it, but the seller robbed me." Today we call charging too much "profiteering" and the extremer forms of price-cutting "dumping". For many centuries, from the later days of pagan Rome to a few generations ago, the permanent idea of justice in prices was far more definite than today. Teachers of morals insisted upon it and law-makers often punished its violation. Where necessary, economic life was organized in associations or guilds, a chief purpose of which was to stabilize prices while maintaining standards of quality. The idea survived the loss of religious unity in Western Europe; for instance it existed in the early settlements on the Atlantic coast of what are now the United States. But with time, as old religious ideas lost power over social life, it weakened and practically disappeared.

The idea which replaced the Just Price was that "the market is always right". In other words, the actions of completely selfish men, all taking every possible advantage in their own individual self-interest, were thought to benefit society. This monstrous idea, like the tolerance of usury, was a child of the age of expansion. By letting producers compete freely, the stupid nineteenth century believed that prices would progressively fall, thus favoring consumers, while industry and improved methods would be stimulated so that producers could continue to profit notwithstanding the, theoretically continuous, fall in prices. In practice this overlooked both the economic power of producers and their strong desire to combine, together with the disastrous effects of cut-throat competition where that could really be brought about. The fall in prices was neither regular nor continuous; to the extent that it took place it was usually counterbalanced – often more than counterbalanced – by progressive deteriorations in quality. "Cheap and nasty" became a byword. A conspicuous example of this deterioration is in the matter of clothing; mediaeval wills show our ancestors expecting to wear this or that article of clothes for life and then to bequeath it to their children. But where is the modern who can do this? Meanwhile in spite of the laws supposed to compel free competition, many industries have fallen under the power of monopolies, trusts, combines, or what-not, based on illegal "understandings". These new monopolies often exist expressly to "freeze out" smaller competitors, and are never subject to the same social responsibility as the old guilds.

Meanwhile, in so far as a free market was achieved at all it dangerously increased price instability and with it the insecurity of the average man. Instead of the steady fall in prices of which nineteenth-century economists dreamed, the course of prices was jagged, far less regular than saw-teeth, and every sharp point cut deeply into the general welfare. A free market is necessarily a speculator's market; everywhere today we see vast economic power wielded by men who are merely lucky gamblers.

As in the case of usury, it is idle to attack those who have benefited by the system while leaving that system untouched. If you rob or kill the successful speculators of today but do not enforce the Just Price you will merely find yourself dealing with a second lot no better than the first.

To restore the Just Price is not so simple in theory as to prohibit usury: a little study will usually show whether a given loan be productive or not, whereas many factors enter into the question of a fair price. For instance, such a price must necessarily be based upon the cost of production, which varies enormously with different countries. There is also the question as to what commodities can be said to have a Just Price at all; articles of pure luxury can hardly be said to have one. If a rich man desires a diamond, there seems no good reason why he should not be made to pay as much as he can and will. Correspondingly if the diamond market were to break, so that jewel merchants and their workers could not live, there seems no good reason why prices should be kept up for the benefit of people who have deliberately chosen to enter a luxury trade.

Since this is so, the re-establishment of the Just Price should come about somewhat differently from the prohibition of usury. As in the case of usury, the first thing is the recognition of the truth: if charging far too much or far too little for an article be wrong, like stealing from either consumers or producers, then the question becomes one of procedure. If on the other hand "the market is always right", and every possible price advantage should be taken by those who have the power, then there is no more to be said. The writer will assume that practically no one desires either profiteering or cut-throat competition, but that all desire a greater stability of prices than now exists.

Indeed this strong desire for greater price stability has bred some strange proposals. Some have suggested stability through currency-tinkering, more colloquially by the use of "funny money" under the high sounding name of a "managed currency". As with so many other modernist notions, the idea is baldly simple, verbally attractive, and completely impracticable. Its sponsors say: let an index of prices be made at regular intervals. If in general they are found to be falling, let more paper tokens (known as money!) be put into circulation until the downward movement is changed. If on the contrary prices are rising, then let paper tokens be withdrawn from circulation until prices have fallen sufficiently. For the sake of the argument let it be supposed that ideally wise and incorruptible men could be found to carry out such a scheme; even then the thing would be amazingly difficult and complex. At the moment the writer has before him an index of a few commodity prices published by a New York bank for the information of its customers. The different items are as follows:

Cement, Portland (Northampton, Pa.–Dollars per bbl.); Copper (Refinery–cents per lb.) Electrolytic; Cotton (New York–Cents per lb.) Middling; Hides & skins (Chicago–Cents per lb.) A: Native Steers Heavy; B: Calf Skins; Petroleum (–Dollars per barrel at well) A: Pennsylvania, B: Bradford. Mid-Continent; Pig Iron (–Dollars per gross ton) Iron Age Composite Price; Rubber (New York–Cents per lb.) Ribbed Smoked Sheet; Silk (New York–Dollars per lb.) Crack X X 13-15 White 78%; Sugar (New York–Cents per lb.) Raw Centrifugal 96°; Wheat (Minneapolis–Dollars per bushel) No. 1, Northern Spring; Wool (Boston–Cents per lb.) A: Ohio ¼ Blood. B: Territory Fine Staple (Scoured Basis).

Since three of the eleven commodities are quoted at two different prices, the total number of prices given is fourteen. That for pig iron is already a composite. There follow four other composite figures: the wholesale commodity index which takes the figures for 1926 as one hundred; Bradstreet's wholesale commodity index, no hundred point being given, the New York State Industrial Commission's average employment index with its hundred point based on an average for the three figures for 1925-26 and -27; and the National Conference Industrial Board's average cost-of-living index with the 1923 figures for its hundred point. Probably not one reader in a thousand, no matter what his experience of affairs, can understand the true bearing of a quarter of the foregoing terms. The rest would have to join the writer in borrowing the couplet which Byron hurled at Wordsworth's "Excursion":

And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

And yet this brief table with its eighteen columns, however esoteric and mysterious, hardly begins to show what currency "managers" would have to do. They would have to decide: first, how many commodities to take into account; second, the relative importance of different grades and localities within each commodity; third, the relative importance of each commodity as a whole against all the others; fourth, the current supply of and demand for credit as against currency. When such a body was known to be directly responsible for the vast injustices and hardships unavoidable under such a system its members would be shining targets for assassination.

Note next that any generalized and hazy approach to price stability within a country would be counterbalanced by the wildest instability of international exchange. Since the world price of many commodities necessarily and vastly influences their domestic price, the would-be managers of national currencies would be working against themselves. While some sound, *i. e.*, metallic, currencies exist, then such managed currencies as the present "Sterling Bloc" are practicable. Were all sound currencies wiped out, then national managed currencies would produce international bedlam.

Finally, ideal wisdom and incorruptibility do not exist. The enormous complexity of currency management would make the managers more immune to informed and intelligent criticism than any priesthood that ever was. Their irresponsible power could be used to enrich "insiders" beyond the dreams of avarice, for those insiders would know in advance just how much funny money was to be put out or withdrawn. Ambition and greed could desire no more powerful instrument.

Altogether, the fact that the idea of managed currencies is taken seriously proves only the unhealthy state of world currency due to usurious credit together with the intellectual degeneracy of our age.

Desiring stability but rejecting the foolish notion of obtaining this desirable end by "currency management", we must therefore achieve the Just Price while maintaining sound money. Although, as we have seen, much might be done by abolishing usury, still that would not fully meet the case.

Assuming the idea of the justice in prices to have been accepted by any considerable number of people, the first step would seem to be its partial and voluntary application. One can imagine a "League of the Just Price" which would begin by considering the prices of necessary articles for which there is fairly continuous demand. Clearly the Just Price would be based upon the cost of production plus what might seem a fair cost of distribution. For most if not all articles it would not be a rigidly fixed price, but would be a bracket with upper and lower limits within which neither buyers nor sellers would suffer positive injustice.

Such a League might operate somewhat as follows: beginning with articles of which the prices had remained reasonably stable for some time, it would inquire whether those prices were felt to be fair — in the Middle Ages the Just Price was determined by "common estimation". Then the League would inquire into the cost of production, including of course transportation and distribution, of these articles, so determining the amount of profit made. The strength of such a League would be the publicity value of its approval; whenever two or more shops were competing in the same locality and line of business, the approval of the League would be precious. Where only one shop was operating and could not get the League's approval the fact would encourage someone else to go into business in that neighborhood. The League of course would have to maintain some sort of tribunal before which complaints either by consumers or producers could be heard. Its effectiveness would be proportionate to the public approval of its decisions. If those decisions could commend themselves as fair, then preachers and writers would rally to the League's support.

The sphere of enforcement of the Just Price by voluntary action might be considerable. Public-spirited Leaguers might picket either profiteering shops or shops which indulged in unfair price-cutting. Significantly enough, the Italian Fascisti before their rise to full power actively opposed profiteering in necessities, and thereby achieved much of the hearty popular support which they still enjoy. Only after the idea of the Just Price had long been familiar and approved, would it be necessary for the State to intervene here and there, punishing particularly flagrant cases of its violation.

The word "picketing" reminds us of labor unions and their endless dispute over wages. Price stability, however, would blunt the edge of these quarrels, whereas sharp price fluctuations exasperate them because they constantly unsettle "real wages", *i. e.*, the amount of actual goods which a wage of so many monetary units will buy. To the extent that the Just Price was enforced, "real wages" would stabilize themselves; a given amount of money would always buy about the same amount of goods. The question of prices thus underlies all questions of wages, indeed prices are more important than the constantly agitated wage question, for everyone must buy things but not everyone lives on wages. To stabilize prices would go a long way toward limiting our continual labor wars.

That the enforcement of stable prices might check invention and productive enterprise while denying to consumers the benefits of cheap production is a real objection but one less forcible than might be supposed. Assuming the Just Price to be not a rigidly fixed price but a bracket with upper and lower limits, anyone willing to sink capital in productive improvements would enjoy a considerable margin of profit while selling at the lowest permitted price. As time went on, other producers would follow suit, thus bringing down the average cost of production throughout the industry. Accordingly when the time came around for a new assessment of the Just Price, the lower bracket would have to be lowered still further, permitting the article to be justly sold at a lower price than before. Whether or not the higher bracket for the Just Price of the same article should then be correspondingly lowered would be a matter of judgement, probably depending upon the number of workmen who would be thrown out of employment and the amount of fixed capital which would be rendered unproductive by the change. The one difference from present conditions would be that the transition to the new level of prices due to lower cost of production would be more gradual and therefore less painful to producers than at present. In the long run the consumer would get his due benefit.

Ultimately other questions would have to be faced. Any attempt to fix prices, no matter how elastically, involves certain standards of quality – to offer inferior articles at the old price is to cheat the consumer. The maintenance of quality throughout an industry might necessitate the organization of the entire industry in some guild or corporation, as all industries are organized in Italy today. In turn the organization of industries into corporations or guilds might make impossible the continuance of the liberal-democratic state which experience has shown to be a mere football kicked about by contending interests and political parties. There would have to be some strong central authority to reconcile the conflicting guild interests and especially to represent the interest of consumers who are not at the same time producers. To ask how that central authority should be constituted and staffed would take us from our immediate subject into the whole question of leadership in the modern world. Formerly these things were done by the hereditary royal Houses and the gentry. How the future will do them remains to be seen.

If anyone prefers to continue price anarchy under the present "liberal-democratic" regimes, that is his affair. At any rate the chain of cause and effect from usury and price anarchy to proletarianism is clear. In appealing to a proletarian audience the communist, since he is working with the drift of proletarian thought, can always overbid the non-communist, and will continue to do so as long as subversive agitation is permitted.

The Middle Ages, enjoying a wide distribution of productive property, vigorously defended their social order against subversive agitation, frequently by means of the Inquisition. They had no silly dogma of unlimited free speech. To change proletarianism into ownership would mean a return to traditional things. No such return can be furthered by mere denunciation of the present social order and the existing rich – not all of whom achieved wealth by usury and speculation. That these base means have enriched this or that base fellow is true. But since law and custom have permitted usury and price fluctuation, usurers and speculators have a right to their winnings. To confiscate those lawful winnings would be crime. "You cannot attack wealth without attacking property, or property without attacking common honesty." The rational solution is to forbid usury and enforce the Just Price.

Mexican Paradox

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

ON THE day before we were to entrain for Mexico, the newspapers carried word that General Calles, late President and Dictator of that dubious Republic, had arrived by plane in the Capital from his self-imposed exile, and that pretty much anything might happen, and probably would.

As predecessor and patron of the present incumbent, General Cardenas, he had taken umbrage at the "radicalism" of his successor (there is paradox even here) and, Achilles-like, had incontinently departed to sulk in his tent this side the Rio Grande. Now he was back with a flourish of airplane wings to save his country from the red radicalism of President Cardenas.

As, dauntless, we proceeded on our way towards Laredo and the ominous frontier, alarming reports headlined themselves in the sequent newspapers. Calles was prepared to head a new party to oust the tyrant; he would organize a new Revolution; he would make himself Dictator. The proletariat was rising against him, fifty thousand workmen, members of the two great trades unions, had demanded his condign expulsion from Mexico by official authority and force of arms, and if this were not done, they would raise the faubourgs, declare a general strike, and themselves march against the General who, report said, was barricaded in his own city house. The zero hour for this great patriotic demonstration was set for Sunday morning, the twenty-second of December — and that was the day and the time at which our train was set to arrive.

It was several hours late, hesitant, perhaps, to enter the danger zone, so there was time for more rumors to come aboard, and these were supplemented by others that met us at the terminal station. Calles was still in the city refusing to be driven out; he had taken refuge in the American Embassy; he was still in his own house, but the President had withdrawn the military, leaving him to his fate, and himself had discreetly left the city to visit certain outlying portions of the state while the American Ambassador had, with equal discretion, gone with his family to spend the Christmas holidays in North Carolina. Yes, the city had risen, and seventy-five thousand enraged citizens were parading through the main streets crying, "Death to Calles!" but thus far they had done little damage beyond turning a lot of fine automobiles bottom up and wrecking one or two busses.

Could we get a taxi to take us and our rather cumbrous hand luggage to the Hotel Ritz? Well, that was another matter. All the fine 1935 cars had been withdrawn and only a scratch lot of ancient and dishonored Fords were on hand — and very few of them. Besides, the Ritz unfortunately lay beyond the line of march and no car could cross this under pain of destruction. Could we get part way? Yes, as far as the procession, and we could walk thereafter. Still, the risk was presumably great, for the first two drivers approached, flatly refused employment. Finally we found one stout fellow who was willing to risk his own life and that of Tin Lizzie; he would take us as far as the line of march, but we should have to pay him two pesetas (fifty-six cents) because of the danger to life, limb, and tin, and he would have to have two lusty chaps on the front seat with him. And so it was arranged.

We started off with some trepidation through streets of a most un-revolutionary quiet and decorum. There were many men, women, and children going about their several occasions. The walls carried placarded manifestos expressed in simple and restrained but sufficiently rude language, referring to General Calles. At one point a small group of men was quietly examining a man-handled omnibus. Just beyond a considerable number of people were leaving a church after Mass. In the open-air market which we crossed, crowds of women and children were buying tall Christmas trees, toys, and riotously beautiful flowers. If there was a revolution on, they were not interested. At the cross streets there were small, brown, Indian soldiers in trim uniforms and carrying very practical-looking rifles. Their gravity and politeness were exemplary, but with firmness they resisted our efforts to run the car down within a block of the procession which we could now see moving steadily down the Avenida Madero and blocking our path. It was then that we took to our feet and our luggage to our backs, and so came up to the great parade. With distinguished courtesy, the serried ranks opened to let us pass, and so we came to the Ritz.

The spectacle was not without its engaging qualities. As a matter of fact, there were, as we afterwards found, about eighty thousand individuals engaged, men, women, and children, all, manifestly, having the time of their lives. There were huge banners, "quarterly gules and sable", and enormously handsome. There seemed to be about as many other signs and long streamers carrying violent sentiments as there were marchers. There were also many bands discoursing good music, and whenever the march halted, a cheer-leader would leap up and down and yell vociferously, so rousing the normally apathetic multitude into a momentary frenzy, which immediately lapsed into quietude again, as soon as the cheer-leader ceased his activities.

And the Revolution did not come off at all! I expect it was never so intended. General Calles was far from the American Embassy and, as a matter of fact, was playing golf while the demonstration was going on. President Cardenas was not out of town but on the balcony of the vast National Palace in the Plaza of the Constitution to receive the "revolutionary mob" when they assembled there, the demonstration being over, all eighty thousand of them, to cheer for him and for the Republic and to signify their disapproval of Plutarco Elias Calles. Astutely the President reminded them that one man, even if a Calles, could not hurt them and so there was no reason why he should be driven out of the country. In a word, he advised them to go home and forget it, which they docilely did after cheering the President with notable enthusiasm and in the very satisfactory conviction that a good time had been had by all.

After such fashion passed a first morning in Mexico. What would be good for an afternoon to continue the development of this new acquaintanceship? Two possiblities offered, both promising. As it was Sunday there was, of course, Revolution or no Revolution, a gala bull-fight and today was rather a special occasion, for the pecuniary proceeds were to go for the benefit of the Mexican Red Cross, so an unusual number of young and vigorous bulls were to be killed. There was a certain piquancy in the conjunction of cause and effect, but the scales finally dipped in favor of the second alternative, the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco.

Now this is a very extraordinary sort of place, both in point of history and present actuality. It is also the chosen resort of the indigenous populace. One aspect we already had seen; here by rights should be another, where the political alarms and excursions had not cast their inhibitive blight. The beautiful city — for it is supremely that — was quiet and sedate, the old palace-lined streets almost empty since apparently everyone was off for either the Bull Ring, Xochimilco, or the park of Chapultepec, which would have been a third alternative had we thought of it. The ten-mile road to the Floating Gardens was, however, sufficiently active with very handsome-motor cars (they had come out of temporary hiding) all headed in the same direction, and crowded trams paralleling the tree-lined avenue which drove almost straight towards one rampart of the blue, encircling mountains, snow-capped Popocatepetl (Popo for short) cloud-crowned to the left.

Centuries ago, long before the coming of Cortez, Xochimilco was one of the many great, shallow lakes that covered much of the area of the seven thousand foot plateau of the Valley of Mexico. The ring of volcanos had ceased their troubling, though hardly, and the warlike Aztecs held and occupied the land in succession to the more highly cultured, and therefore conquered, Toltecs. They had made their capital, Tenochtitlan, where now stands the City of Mexico, one of the most sumptuous and splendid cities in history, rivaling Thebes and Babylon and Alexandria. Of course, Cortez destroyed it to the last and uttermost stone, even the great central pyramid as huge as that of Cheops in Egypt, together with the Arabian Nights palace of the Emperor Montezuma, but that is quite another story.

This great city of some 300,000 population was fed from the luxuriant surrounding country, and so thickly settled was it that the agricultural communities built artificial islands in the nearby lakes to use for their gardens. These island allotments were founded on rafts of wattles, and for centuries they floated in the shallow waters. As the Chichemec civilization declined to its final extinction under the Spaniards, the willow trees on the islands sent down their roots to the lake bottom, anchoring them where they stood, and so they are today, endless in number with tortuous lagoons threading between them, the willows grown tall, delicate, and slim, the banks bordered with violets, pansies, carnations, and hedges of giant calla lilies, and as ever the interior garden plots furnishing vegetables for the City of Mexico. And today as of old (say three or four centuries before the sailing of the Mayflower) the gentle descendants of Toltec and Aztec, pole their flat-bottomed skiffs up the single surviving canal of the many that once led to imperial Tenochtitlan, loaded with particolored fruit and vegetables for the feeding of the polyglot, motor-driving, radio-attending, night-club haunting population of the capital city of the Revolutionary Republic of Mexico.

With a twentieth-century rush we plunged into twentieth-century proletarian Mexico, having a perfectly elegant time on a holiday. A plexus of restaurants, bar rooms, dance halls, booths for all sorts of plunder and provender, was very much mixed up with lurid signs proclaiming the varied virtues of whisky, beer, and tobacco, with parked automobiles, horses and donkeys for hire, and canopied, flower-hung flat-boats for the unescapable, leisurely cruise through the lagoons of Xochimilco. I should judge that the entire eighty thousand of the earlier political demonstration were present in person.

Here was indeed complete and crowded confusion, and yet it was comparatively soundless, or would have been but for the not very insistent string music, conscientiously Mexican, in the dance halls not far away, and the low-pitched voices of the boatmen urging the virtues of their respective conveyances. The Mexicans, both Indian and *Mestizo*, are very quiet and soft-spoken – except when they are demonstrating and are roused to sudden and rather forced vociferousness by a professional *claqueur*. Automobiles, radios, and dogs seem to be the only offensive agencies of unnecessary noise. And the multitudinous children are the quietest of all. Here at Xochimilco, the crowd was slow-moving, soft-spoken, considerate, but it was also exceedingly cheerful and happy. Dormant memory awoke and softly murmured the words: Revere Beach; Coney Island.

Now the method of procedure here is this. You choose your boat either because you like its fancy name, or the shape and color of its canopy, or the face of the boatman, and then you push off into the maze of narrow winding lagoons. On a holiday like this, procedure is much like what it would be at Forty-second Street and Fifth Avenue, if there were no traffic lights. No one minds, however, for no one is going anywhere in particular or is in a hurry to get there. The flatboats nose their way along patiently and with consideration, and there is plenty to see and to enjoy.

It is apparently the thing for whole families to hire a boat and, while drifting along between the flowery banks and under the tall trees, to eat and drink for the major part of the afternoon. Many of the boats have long, narrow tables down the middle, and here the family is seated contentedly feasting in the warm, still air. Here are boats of *colorado maduro* musicians threading in and out of the slow-moving flotilla, some large enough to accommodate two or three dancing couples. Slim, narrow skiffs like Esquimeau kyaks, gunwales level with the water, and manned, so to speak, by an old woman, a young girl, or a small boy, edge up alongside, loaded with all sorts of flowers from sheaves of giant callas to bunches of violets. Others offer beer, soft drinks, cooked food of every kind, or the chance to be photographed as you go. Everywhere is flickering music, the ripple of gentle conversation in soft Mexican dialect, good humor, smiles, and quiet contentment. There are ten square miles of this mesh of land and water ten miles from Mexico City with its twelve hundred thousand population, its bull-fights, cinemas, night-clubs, motorcars, and political agitation. Here is only a gentle and friendly proletariat on holiday, and the dissolving memory of vanished peoples that centuries ago built up in this magical land a great culture and a greater art. And now . . . .

The newspapers tonight announce that unless General Calles is driven from Mexico by force of arms, the labor unions will immediately declare a general strike throughout the Republic that will at once stop all traffic, all public services, and all business of every kind. The Mexican paradox—and not of Mexico alone.

The Old South and the New

FRANK L. OWSLEY

YEARS ago, during the World War, I travelled from Chicago by way of Cincinnati to Montgomery, Alabama, in the company of a group of young ladies from the North who were visiting their men-folk encamped at Camp Sheridan. None of them had been South before, and they were looking forward to the journey through the "Sunny South" with considerable excitement. They had, despite everything which had ever been said to the contrary in the North, a romantic conception of the South. They expected to enter a pleasant land of white-columned mansions, green pastures, expansive cotton and tobacco fields where negroes sang spirituals all the day through. But, with the exception of the blue-grass basins of middle Kentucky and middle Tennessee, and an occasional fertile valley here and there where beautiful old homes yet stood amidst their fertile acres, no such picture greeted these romantic young ladies. After crossing the Ohio River, what they saw – with the exceptions of these lovely spots in middle Kentucky and Tennessee – were gutted hill-sides; scrub oak and pine; bramble and blackberry thickets; bottom lands once fertile now senile and exhausted, with spindling tobacco, corn, or cotton stalks to bear witness to the senility; unpainted houses which were hardly more than shacks or here and there the crumbling ruins of old mansions covered with briars, the homes of snakes and lizards.

On for hundreds of miles this desolation unfolded: the Sunny South of Romance had disappointed my friends. There were always lovely spots here and there, but the rush of the train soon carried us past such oases back into the interminable wastes. Such is the picture, also, of the South from Washington to Miami, Florida, if one travels through the Southern States east of the mountains – with the exception of the beautiful Shennandoah Valley and the fertile region of middle Georgia. Such is the picture of the country, with the exception of the fertile black basin of middle Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and the delta along the great river and some of its tributaries, if one travels west to the Mississippi. There are beautiful cities in the South, lovely towns and villages; but the panoramic view of this land is one of ruin and desolation.

There is one important element, however, in this Southern scene which gives me some cheer: the people. If one does not travel too fast through this desolate country, he will form some acquaintance with its inhabitants; and if he has lived elsewhere he will be struck by the courtesy and good manners and the genuine kindliness of even the most humble people as well as their high level of integrity. He will be impressed by other characteristics, too. From high to low, there is a keen sense of humor and love of fun: life is not as barren as it looks. The religious sense is highly developed in the South, which Mencken has been pleased to call the "Bible Belt", and the people as a whole still cling to the belief of their fathers from which they derive solace in their bereavements and comfort in bearing the deprivations of poverty. In sharp contrast to this religious sense one who sojourns among these people long enough will find another characteristic: the decided tendency toward homicide as a mode of settling permanently certain types of personal differences.

II

Mr. Kendrick and Mr. Arnet attempt to explain the South and its people; and they are very clever and skillful to be able to accomplish their task so well within such a small volume.* Presumably the first portion is written by Mr. Kendrick and the latter by Mr. Arnett, both natives of the red soil of Georgia.

I am impressed with the objectivity of the essay. Neither author has had his views obscured by the haze of romance. Mr. Kendrick's task has been to re-examine certain fundamental phases of the old South, which was definitely wrecked by the end of reconstruction, while Mr. Arnett has built his essay upon this background of destruction which focusses the whole upon the present desperate situation of the South: the red gullies, scrub pines, interminable waste lands, forlorn cabins, old ruins, its population with its conflicting kindliness and homicidal propensities, its docility and rebelliousness, its willingness to submit to regimentation under paternalistic masters, and its individualism.

Mr. Kendrick's first chapter is the re-examination of the "Old South Traditional and Real". He brings to this task a rare acquaintance with that body of critical literature which has been produced upon the subject during the last few years as well as a broad knowledge of the basic source-material. The South, he says, was not the land of cruelty ruled by haughty slave oligarchs as the abolitionists charged, nor the land of white-columned mansions and cavaliers which the pro-slavery philosophers claimed, or which Thomas Nelson Page pictured in his romantic novels. There were, he says, hundreds of fine old colonial homes, equipped with good libraries, where cultured, well-educated planters lived. But the greater number of the million and a half people who were slave owners lived in simple, unpretentious homes. Nor were many of the planters descended from the English gentry. On the contrary they were primarily descended from the stout English yeomanry and middle class. In this conclusion, he agrees with Wertenbaker who has made a most critical study of this matter and disagrees with Bruce who has also made an exhaustive study of the same question. In any case, the wealthy planters were possessed of a high degree of culture and education. Regardless of whether their establishments were mansions or cottages, there was one characteristic which the planter class had: the joy of living, the art of living. The farmers and small land owners who made up the bulk of the Southern white population did not have as much leisure as the planters, yet their way of life was unhurried and much of their time was devoted to social intercourse and sports.

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* THE SOUTH LOOKS AT ITS PAST *by B. B. Kendrick and A. M. Arnett* (UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS. 196 pp. $2.00).

The negro was well treated as a rule and regarded as a member of the family, except upon the great plantations where there was little contact with the master. The separation of families was much less frequent under slavery than under the capitalistic industrial system of today. The work of U. B. Phillips, Flanders, Sydnor, and other recent students of slavery support such a statement; on the other hand Bancroft's volume on the Inter-State Slave Trade challenges it. In these days of insecurity, it is pleasant to note that the slave possessed a great sense of security. He was cared for until he was old enough to work, well cared for; and when he became too old or ill to work, the master and mistress fed, clothed, housed, and nursed him until death, whereupon he was given a Christian burial in the family cemetery, and quite frequently, I may add, he had a marble slab with affectionate sentiment inscribed upon it placed at the head of his grave.

At the bottom of the social and economic hierarchy was the "poor white" class. Here again, Kendrick shows a critical knowledge of the literature bearing upon this subject. This class, he says, was not numerous; it was the malarial and hookworm-infested population who lived upon the sandy barrens of the coastal plains. These people were shiftless and hopeless, largely because of their chronic ill health, which at the time was called "laziness".

Public education was making great strides in the South during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, contrary to the well-worn grooves of historical prejudice.

> In 1860 [says Mr. Kendrick] about seventeen per cent of the white population of the slave-holding states was in school, against about twenty per cent in the free states. But progress was more rapid in the South than else-

where in the eighteen-fifties. A movement for comprehensive systems of free public schools had begun to show results in the thirties and gained momentum thereafter. In 1839 North Carolina took the lead of the Southern States in providing for a statewide system, some years in advance of several of the Northern States. The Tar Heel system, integrated and improved in the fifties, became a model which other Southern States were studying and preparing to follow. It is important to remember in this connection that despite (and partly because of) the missionary zeal of the carpetbaggers, the system did not gain its 1860 level until a full generation after the war.

Higher education received greater attention in the South than in the North. "The South founded the first state universities – the first to be chartered was the University of Georgia, and the first to be opened was the University of North Carolina." The South gave a much larger proportion of its youth college education than did the North. "In 1860 there were 26,000 students in Southern colleges and 27,500 in Northern, and the latter included large numbers from the South"; and this does not take into account the considerable number who were educated in Europe.

After his re-examination of the old South, Mr. Kendrick concludes his portion of the book with a study of the causes of the Civil War. Here again he discloses a thorough knowledge of the critical literature which bears upon this subject. In essence the war grew out of a sectional struggle for control of the Federal Government, a struggle between the Industrial East and Agricultural South. The control of the West would decide the contest. The author points out a truth which is only recently coming to be recognized: the South was foredoomed to lose in its efforts to maintain the equality of slave and free states, for the natural limits of slavery had been reached by 1845. Here the author is supported by Ramsdell, Webb, Phillips, Milton, and others who have studied the matter closely within the last few years. In short, the anti-slavery crusade to keep the South out of the territories, was not based upon reality. On the other hand it helped create sectional ill feeling which made it easy for the East to gain the alliance of the Northwest in 1860 and bring about the election of Lincoln upon a sectional question by a sectional vote, which in turn precipitated secession and war.

Kendrick concludes that the Old South did not, as has been so frequently asserted,

> Die because of internal disease gnawing at its vitals but was overthrown by an outside system which it had more or less unconsciously offended. To this outside system [the Industrial order of the East] it was not in reality dangerous. . . . Had it [the Old South] continued it probably would have retarded the gaining of overweening power by the industrial capitalists and given to agriculture a more articulate voice in governmental policies.

After the death of the Old South

> Reconstruction subjected its body to mutilation and indignity. . . . We neither praise nor blame it [the Old South] or its enemies but insist that it did not deserve the hard fate of being cut off in the flower of its age. From the way of life which history and tradition ascribe to it we may glean much for the creation of a better and newer South.

III

Mr. Arnett, as I have said, devotes his attention to the period from reconstruction to the present. The South, of course, became solidly Democratic, because of its experience in reconstruction; but the Democratic party had two elements who struggled for control: the Bourbon Democrats and the "Wool Hat Boys". From the outside, it was at first thought that the Bourbon Democrats were the representatives of the Old South; in fact it was this belief which gave rise to the name Bourbon – which never learns and never forgets anything. Actually the "Wool Hat Boys" represented agrarian interests and the Bourbons, despite their brigadier-general's rank in the late Confederate army, were the first leaders of the "New South" movement, which preached the text "agree with thine enemy quickly". Become like the North as quickly as possible. Cling no longer to the old ways of life, to an agricultural economy, "when God and the civilized world had decided in favor of industrialism!" Nor can one, who realizes the complete destruction of the economic and social structure, and the persecution of the South during and after the days of reconstruction, fail to understand the "New South" doctrine.

It is easy today to accuse such men as Henry Grady and Sydney Lanier and Walter Hines Page of sycophancy; at the same time it should be remembered that there was no prospect for an agricultural South ever to raise its head again. These men clearly understood that the war had not been a war between slavery and freedom, but one between an industrial and an agrarian society. The latter had lost and it was believed that the lack of industrialization of the South had contributed largely to the final defeat of the South. Looked at in prospect the leaders of the "New South Movement" were absolutely convinced that the South could never again wield its just share of influence in the national government until it was made over, as Thad Stevens had said, "in the image of New England". As a matter of both personal and sectional interest they regarded the industrialization of the South as imperative.

There were more immediate reasons for the industrialization of the South: the destitution of its people. The agrarian social and economic system of the South had been killed by the Civil War and its body mutilated by reconstruction. The reorganization of the agricultural population under the tenant system degraded and still further lowered the status of agriculture. Then the years of depression in agricultural prices at the time when the North and industry were prospering greatly pauperized millions of people to the extent that a cotton factory was regarded as an eleemosynary institution. The text of the evangelist in Salisbury North Carolina bore eloquent testimony to this attitude. "Next to the Grace of God," he exclaimed to his congregation, "what Salisbury needs is a cotton mill!" Salisbury got its cotton mill as a result. Much of the "New South Movement" was born of such tragic circumstances as caused this preacher to make such an utterance and to promote the building of a factory.

Contrary to present-day belief, the money which created factories and brought about the beginning of industrialization in the South was Southern money, blood money, indeed, which hard-bitten farmers, supply merchants, bankers, and lawyers had managed to squeeze out of the reluctant soil or from farmers who secured supplies to run their farms at pawnbroker rates. It was only after the cotton, steel, and coal businesses were securely established in the South, and the railroads built that Northern money came in and consolidated the smaller industries and railroad companies, watered their stock, or began genuine expansion.

The men who built these factories were frequently sturdy, thrifty farmers, of whom the Duke family furnishes an excellent illustration. These men were narrow, poorly educated, and usually had no respect for education above the three "r's". In the cities, they became the founders of country clubs, and their daughters and wives formed the circle known as "Society". It was this intellectual and moral sterility along with the degradation of both the agricultural and industrial population which gave rise to Mencken's well known diatribe in "The Sahara of the Bozart"; and to a reaction among men of intelligence against the "New South" gospel.

Mr. Arnett takes note, in this connection, of the great intellectual renaissance which began in the South in the early twenties. In poetry, art, fiction, history, social and economic criticism, much was a revolt against the philosophy of "The New South". He takes particular note of the movement to return the landless and jobless proletariat to the soil; and in general, to rehabilitate the rural South, which, despite the great power of the industrialized portion still contains the bulk of the population. There are numerous groups advocating this agrarian reform, and, contrary to Mr. Arnett's statement, the Nashville group has made the most radical proposal of all: it proposes that the government purchase all the land owned by absentee landlords (including banks, insurance companies, etc.) insolvent farmers and planters, and homestead, free, the tenant farmers and those unemployed in the city with agricultural experience, and furnish them with work-stock and supplies for a year. However, if Mr. Arnett has failed to note this phase of the renaissance it only goes to show, as he observes, that the agrarian movement as expressed by the Nashville group is of minor importance – much to the regret of the latter of whom the reviewer is a member.

I commend this book to all thoughtful Americans. It deserves a wide hearing. Both authors have performed a clean-cut and much needed operation. From beginning to end they have cut at the heart of the matter.

REVIEWS

A Traditionalist in Spite of Herself*

MRS. MORGAN's deeply felt discussion of the plight of the human individual in modern society brings up, in unusually insistent form, the whole question of what constitutes the "collective world" which she and most of the other writers of the day assume to be "here, an accomplished fact"; and of whether this really constitutes a problem that has no parallel in the past. In Mrs. Morgan's definition this "collective world" is essentially one in which non-rational and non-material values are difficult or impossible of cultivation. And her thesis – that we need a new conception of individuality to cope with this new kind of world – rests upon the assumption that we are confronted by a society which differs from that of previous eras not only in degree but in kind.

For the Marxist (whom Mrs. Morgan condemns) the difference is certainly one of kind: a change which he believes to be manifested in the rise of a class-conscious "proletariat" which has declared war upon a "bourgeoisie" supposed to be equally class-conscious, and which causes him frequently to insist upon the imminent possibility of a heaven upon earth. For the philosopher of the artistocratic school of Ortega (with whose thinking Mrs. Morgan is clearly sympathetic) the difference is also radical, marked by a totally new phenomenon: the rise to social predominance, the "vertical penetration", of something called the "mass mind". Both conceptions have yet to have their reality established. But the acceptance of either leads to the conclusion – as Mrs. Morgan is led – that the individual today is subjected to unprecedented pressures which threaten to straitjacket all the individuality in him; and that individuality can only be preserved by conceiving of the individual, and of his conflict with society, in terms that are totally new.

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* INDIVIDUALITY IN A COLLECTIVE WORLD *by Barbara Spofford Morgan* (NORTON. 260 pp. $2.00.).

These pressures Mrs. Morgan describes at length, and effectively: the pressure toward mental uniformity, "which is important for mass production"; the pressure of the appeal to immediate satisfactions; the disintegrating pressure of the scientific point of view when applied to human life. Confronted by them – confronted, in short, by a society of material uniformity and spiritual mediocrity – Mrs. Morgan pleads for a sort of natural aristocracy of personality, implying a new set of values capable of withstanding the mass pressures of this new collectivism.

But why a "new" collectivism, why a "new" set of values? However the author defines individuality – for her it would seem ultimately to be a sort of effortful unfolding of the personality, together with its reflection in all its works – her definition must rest finally upon the dignity of the human individual, as expressed in the conflict between material and non-material values; and to safeguard these non-material and distinctively human values we have a long tradition and a powerful philosophy ready to our hands. It is true that the "pressures" here exclusively assigned to something called "collectivism" are more obvious, more nearly naked than in the past, but they are far from *new*. It is true that the individual finds them more difficult to combat than in a period when, in economic matters, there was less confusion of rights, and in spiritual matters less confusion of philosophies. But the conflict is the same; and it would take a black pessimist indeed to believe that these pressures are not daily being combated and overcome; that in the very heart of industrial society there are not men and women who steadily exemplify the victory of the human over the mechanistic; or that to achieve that victory they find it necessary to seek any set of values beyond those which are a part of the fundamental traditions of the Western world.

In the things which she has chosen to condemn, and in those which she sets up as objectives, Mrs. Morgan is herself an unconfessed witness to the continuing validity of these traditional standards. A few quotations will make the point:

> It is suggestive [she writes] that Catholic countries, where non-rational and non-material values are still deeply entrenched, have not succumbed to the mechanization of living to anything like the extent of the Protestant countries. . . .
>
> . . . The scientific point of view, which so impressively marshals the physical world in our support and defense, is likely to become in human life an agent of disintegration and destruction. . . .
>
> . . . As long as individuality is conceived and provided for in mechanistic terms, so long will our civilization be dominated by the very values . . . which check the individual's development. . . .

> . . . The benefits of a collective society [efficient provision for material needs] do indeed make life run more smoothly, but they are not what we live for. . . . They miss the deepest desires of men. . . .

In all this, as in her condemnation of the disintegration of the family, of the transient and rootless nature of American life, of the Deweyan notions of children's capacity for "self-expression", and in her implied defense of free will ("the design of man's nature", she writes, "has to be largely developed by himself"), Mrs. Morgan might be reading straight from the book of Western experience. Yet although she adopts and utilizes an absolute standard of values in her judgements (and greatly to her credit), in her philosophy she leaves no place for absolutes, ignores ethics, and speaks only in the vaguest terms of "the good society". Perhaps the key is given in a curious disclaimer which appears toward the end of the book:

> The theory of individuality presented in this book has left two important aspects of the subject out of consideration. One is the religious, the other the practical. The highest religious interpretation of individuality was given by Jesus Christ in his gospel of the individual soul which is the special object of God's care, and his gospel of personal immortality. Probably no more life-giving ideas than these have ever been offered to striving and stumbling humanity; but profoundly appealing as they are, and profoundly important as is the fact of death to every living being, these problems are outside the scope of my present purpose. . . .

Such a summary of Mrs. Morgan's argument scarcely does justice to the book, which covers a much wider range of ideas. It is a stimulating book, if only because one sympathizes so thoroughly with many of its conclusions, while disagreeing so fundamentally with the terms in which the argument is couched. It is an encouraging book, for it is the work of a woman (surely not unique in the "collective" world) of fine sensibility and a strong sense of traditional values, who even when she goes far afield in her attempt to construct a new philosophy where none is needed, can still reach an extraordinary number of sound conclusions when she is willing to take insight for her guide. And it may well be a useful book if it succeeds in making its readers re-examine the meaning of such seductive terms as "the collective world" and "the mass man", and the individual's relation to them. For it is not the lack of a new philosophy which holds modern man back from a truly human life: it is his frequent failure to realize that the old philosophy is still a prodigious weapon, and that the conflict is the same old conflict, provided only he makes the effort to discover the old enemy under the new disguise.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

Culture and Christianity*

READERS who have not yet looked into any of the dozen volumes already published by the Reverend Dr. Hough may find his present book an effective medium for making his acquaintance. It is brief, comprehensive, alluringly concrete, and remarkably climactic. One may say it begins with Glasgow and ends with Jerusalem the Golden. Considering the title of the book the first of its five chapters may strike the reader as pleasantly superficial, and I think it is indeed somewhat too "literary". But soon one finds that it is an integral part of the author's whole plan. It pictures the murkinesses of industrial cities while it hints at an ever present Light – in such a way as to lend full point to its closing sentence: "There is no spot in which a human being finds himself from which there is not a straight road to the City of God." And that road is pursued through the remaining chapters, which form an ascending series showing the appeal of the Christian gospel to the Mind, the Conscience, the Heart, and the Whole Life.

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* THE GREAT EVANGEL *by Harold Lynn Hough* (COKESBURY PRESS. 167 pp. $1.50).

The second and third chapters may be considered together. The author urges that today "true evangelism" must be "intelligence on fire". The modern mind needs to be and can be convinced that Christianity has in it the most "coherent interpretation of the universe and life". Intelligence can learn that "God must be the great sufferer as well as the complete intelligence". Here one expects the author to give his own exploration of Incarnational philosophy. But he does not do this; nor does he render an adequate account of what may be called non-Christian moral happiness. No doubt he considered those two topics too large for such a short book. But he develops convincingly the following truth: "The very structure of moral personality sets processes in motion which must at last find their fruition in religion that transcends morality at the very moment when it fulfills all its high behests." In passing, he makes sharp criticisms of false religiosities, such as "the subtle aesthetic pleasure of being altruistic"; and finally he brings out "the gay zest" which belongs to the true faith.

The fourth chapter, in which the theme culminates, is nothing short of masterly. Let the cultivated reader who shrinks from an essay entitled "The Evangel which Wins the Heart" – let him read this chapter. Here he may find a culture richer than his own; a happy art of combining informality with firm form; and, more deeply interfused, an authentic fire. Read for instance the allegory, early in this chapter, of the "Christ of hate" – the kind of Christ that the purest and loftiest man of men would have become if, after fathoming with unique insight all the wickedness of a world that was rejecting him, had in the end rejected it, supernally hating its ways. As for the real Christ: "There was not enough wickedness in the world to take the love out of his heart and to put hate in its place. . . ." Towards the end of the chapter "the deathless splendor of love which saves the world" is illustrated by a homely incident (too sacred to be recounted in a review) taken from the author's own pastoral experience. He relates it with perfect taste – a very difficult thing to do under the circumstances – and with profound religious effect. The final chapter, without descending from the high level of value attained by its predecessor, broadens the point of view, giving a swift and true picture of the functions of the Christian Church in modern society.

Oddly enough, just as I am finishing this review, there comes to me through the mail a clipping from

The New York Times headed "Plea for Church Unity with Rome issued by 29 High Episcopalians", and containing the assertion that "Protestantism is bankrupt, ethically, culturally, morally, and religiously". One can stand four adverbs ending in "ly" when the manner is so earnest, but one may reflect that only God can know with any certainty whether Protestantism is so utterly insolvent – so quadruply damned. I remember now, what had slipped my mind, that Dr. Hough is a Methodist. And I note that his book exemplifies a kind of catholicity which makes for the reunion of all branches of the Christian Church, culturally and religiously.

G. R. ELLIOTT

Partial Return to Philosophy *

PROVOKED by the fact that many people today adopt what he calls an instinctively derogatory attitude to reason, the author of this book makes a forceful attack on contemporary unreason as represented by fashionable prophets like Aldous Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Sigmund Freud, and Mrs. Eddy. Each of these, as well as a host of disciples, is responsible, he believes, for the modern effort to dethrone reason from the seat which has been traditionally claimed for her by that great line of Western thinkers which began with Plato. So he sets forth to examine the entire subjectivist position and to expose its inadequacy in art, in morals, and in thought. Linking together the various essays that constitute the book there is the definite theme described by him as the defence of reason, the affirmation of values, and the plea for a philosophy of human life.

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* RETURN TO PHILOSOPHY *by C. E. M. Joad.* (DUTTON. 279 pp. $2.50).

In the preface he outlines his standpoint. He holds that reason, if properly employed, can give us truth, that beauty is a real value which we can train our minds to discern, that some things are really right in the sense that others are really wrong, and that to discern value is what he understands to be the purpose of philosophy. This outline is clarified for us in the course of the argument when we discover that he is a dualist who believes that life is a real and independent principle which is distinct from matter and animates it.

Evolution he accepts as a real process in time, "a purposive process in which life, initially a blind, unconscious thrust, seeks to develop an ever higher degree of consciousness". This development of consciousness he describes as a sharpening and widening of the mind's faculty of awareness with the result that more and more of the world outside us is revealed to the knowing mind. The process of knowing, he says, is one of discovering what is already there, and not of imputing or creating what is not. "We in no sense create or even contribute to what we know."

With this aggressive realism as his equipment he goes after Aldous Huxley who, in the well-known essay on Pascal, professes to be "a worshipper of life, who accepts all the conflicting facts of human existence". Joad states Huxley's position as follows:

> The gospel of the Life-accepter is that we should live to the full extent of *all* our various faculties and capaci-

ties; we should develop *every* side of our nature, realize *all* that we have it in us to be. "To live," we are told, "the soul must be in intimate contact with the world, must assimilate it through all the channels of sense and desire, thought and feeling, which nature has provided for the purpose."

This fashionable philosophy denies the absolute reality of any values, according to Joad. Rejecting the capacity of the human reason to achieve truth, it consequently denies philosophy in favor of science. In the sphere of human conduct it refuses to acknowledge reason's power and right to lay down norms of behavior, and consequently discards principle in favor of individual whim. Aldous Huxley comes into the picture because, in Joad's view, it is in his writings that this current philosophy of human living finds its characteristically modern expression.

In his critical analysis of this position Joad does not disdain the *argumentum ad hominem.* He fears that Huxley, judged by his own standard of vitality as the exclusive criterion of value, is a very worthless person, for he does not employ his physical faculties at full stretch, he does not live the life of the passions and senses, and his actions are not vigorous and robust. "I doubt even whether he makes hearty meals. Compared with Adolf Hitler, Falstaff, Torquemada, Cobbett, or even Casanova he is very little alive. And yet I maintain that he is a man of very great value indeed." There are several pages of this kind of argument.

But when he gets down to the serious business of criticism of Huxley's intellectual anti-rationalism he can be serious enough. He successfully makes the point that Huxley, in denying the validity of all philosophical systems, asserts the very thing he denies. Huxley's claim is that you must observe phenomena, correlate them, construct formulae which describe them, if you wish to know what the universe is really like. But your conclusions tell us about you, not about reality. "A philosophy," says Joad by way of exposition of his opponent's case, "is not an account of the universe; it is a symptom of a state of mind."

How does he reach this conclusion? Apparently by process of reasoning from sense experience. He is using excellent philosophical arguments in defence of a philosophical position. The fact that the position consists in the assertion that all philosophical positions are a reflection of self and not a transcript of reality, and that the arguments are devoted to showing that philosophical arguments are vicious rationalizations of instinctive wishes, does not in the least detract from the philosophical character of his achievement. It merely stultifies it.

Realizing, however, that the charge of inconsistency is one which peculiarly fails to wring Huxley's withers, our author attacks along another line. Huxley exempts science from the gravamen of his indictment on the ground that science does not, like philosophy, venture to prescribe to reality; it is content to record it, to observe facts, to predict other facts not yet observed. Joad admits this but properly points out that science does much more; it works up its observations into formulae, reasons about them, and draws what purport to be universally applicable conclusions. "These conclusions may or may not be true. But how are they reached? By process of ratiocination upon the evidence supplied by the senses." Why then, asks Joad, should the scientist, using a method like the philosophers, escape Huxley's strictures?

But the main issue is with Huxley's theory of knowledge. That theory holds that all our knowledge comes to us through sense experience and is limited by sense experience. Joad flatly denies this, on the ground that "some of our knowledge does not come to us through sense experience". We have, he says, an *a priori* knowledge, which only reason can give to us. The general propositions of mathematics are true, and "that they are true is known otherwise than through the senses [although] sense experience is necessary to draw our attention to them". And then he goes on to say:

> Even if no objects existed, even if, that is to say, there were no particular things for us to experience and for it to apply to, the general proposition that two plus two make four would, it is realized, still be true and *could still be known by mind*. Thus, though sense experience may be necessary to draw our attention to the truth, the truth itself is seen to be independent of such experience. *It is not, therefore, by means of sense experience that it is known.* [The italics are mine.]

Now, from the scholastic viewpoint, both disputants are at fault. Huxley errs by the exaggerated value he imputes to sense experience as an element in the process of cognition. Joad errs by his disparagement of the rôle played by the senses in being the starting-point of all our knowledge as well as by his recourse to an *a priori* brand of cognition. To expound the position of the *philosophia perennis* on the problem of knowledge would take us too far afield. It is sufficient to state here that all our knowledge has its origin in sense data. It is by the senses that we obtain a foothold in reality. It is from the senses that we obtain a grasp on the cognitional determinant (*species sensibilis*) which stimulates the intellect to the immanent act of knowing. Without objects for the senses to fasten to, we could never know anything. As the old phrase has it: *nihil in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu, sed alio modo in sensu, alio autem modo in intellectu.* Everything which is in intellect as knowledge somehow began as sense impression; it exists in one way in the sense world, in quite a different way in the intellect.

In this connection it is well to recall that Aristotle says that we never have a mental conception that is not accompanied by a picture in the imagination; sometimes that image is a representation of an object in nature, sometimes a mathematical symbol, sometimes simply a conventional sign like a word from common speech. So closely is this image bound up with the concept that we have to make a conscious effort to distinguish the one from the other. Those who fail to make this effort are constantly confusing imaginative imagery with intellectual thought.

Joad's championship of reason leads him into other excesses. For instance, he says that the principle of induction is a self-evident truth on behalf of which no evidence is to be demanded. From this he argues that, to the degree that all our reasoning rests upon the principle of induction, reasoning has an irrational basis. He then proceeds to say that there is an element of direct revelation in all thinking. What he seems to forget is that the intellect is a vital faculty which automatically drives straight for the truth. It is not a merely passive spectator who sits in the stalls and waits for the curtain to go up. Logical truth is not outside the intellect, but is within it as the essential element of the vital, immanent act of knowing.

Although Joad chooses Huxley as the chief objective he manages to find time for D. H. Lawrence and for some of the little Lawrences who affect to regard reason as the tool of impulse and desire. This section could have been the most interesting part of the book, but it is brief out of all relation to its importance. The anti-rationalism of Lawrence pervades a great deal of the thought of the typical youth of today. "Scarcely a novel is written that does not implicitly or explicitly endorse it."

> The life of the philsopher or scholar is today decried because it does not give scope to our passions and impulses. Under the influence of D. H. Lawrence and similar writers, men have come to think that thinking is almost a crime. We must not even permit reason to guide [our lives] in the home or in the market place. To do so is to do violence to our "real" nature by damming up the stream of impulses and desires in which it resides. Reason is treated as a sort of excrescence, as absorbing for its own nourishment the generous forces of man's passional nature, thus depriving the organism as a whole of the primitive energy which alone can give zest and love of living. Reason has become a cancer preying upon the tissues of the soul.

In his all too brief criticism of this contempt of reason, Joad points out that Lawrence has given it its most notable literary expression and provided it with its Bible. He might also have added that the writings of the early Freudians have given it its most notable "scientific" expression. Telling us that Lawrence affected to have found the perfect type of humanity in men in whom the intellect was demonstrably subordinate to the stomach and other anatomical areas, he calls the Lawrentian creed by the title "belly worship". He says that this "cult of the intestines" springs from a source different from that of the sophisticated Huxleyan relativism, that it is inspired by different motives, and issues in a different creed. Huxley, it seems, does not condemn reason but merely denies its primacy. Lawrence, on the other hand, would like to submerge it altogether. Why, therefore, does our author give the greater part of his book to a discussion of Huxley and only a few pages to that of Lawrence? Joad's answer is: "The influences upon contemporary life and thought of these two such different gospels of two such different men are not dissimilar. Each has contributed his quota to the anti-rationalism of the age."

Despite his faulty epistemology Joad makes a great case against Huxley, and he might have made as good a case, if not better, against Lawrence if he had taken the trouble to sit down to the job. As an experienced controversialist, he is prone to the use of the *argumentum ad hominem* even to the point of using lurid language. In spite of all that, it is a good thing that somebody of Joad's standing and skill should rise up to knock the false gods from their pedestals. In a righteous action of that sort few men are likely to attend to the precision or delicacy of language.

A word about the constructive side of the book. Joad's philosophy is evolutionist. He sees life in a world of matter. Life knows matter and depends on matter.

Now the process of evolution, he tells us, means more and more of that knowledge and less and less of that dependence. In this stage of our ongoing we are concerned with the progressive mastery of matter. In the next stage we shall move up to the realm of values. "Thus our future progress may be conceived as one in which, passing beyond thought, we shall reach the level of illumination which the mystic and the artist now enjoy uncertainly and intermittently."

The limits of space debar us from a criticism of this view. But it is worth noticing that the elaboration of it leads the author into several wild statements. It seems, for example, that "savages think a little more than animals, but not much". Also, we are told that in the brief period studied by historical anatomy "we have learned to dispense with tails and we are progressively eliminating organs such as the appendix and growths such as the toe-nails". A third remarkable statement is that "the urge to think has caused us to achieve an unprecedented growth in brain structure, and the increasing size of the human head adds to the difficulties and dangers of childbirth".

Even though Joad's thinking is muddied by the illogical atmosphere in which our generation lives, he has written with sincerity and enthusiasm a book that needed to be written. In his righteous indignation he has sought to recall our generation to the claims of reason and common sense. It is not to be imputed to him for personal fault that he succeeds far better as a destructive critic of current evils than as a proponent of a system of thought that would bring back to the youth of our time the philosophy their fathers lost.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE

The Watershed of the Nineteenth Century*

AS PERSPECTIVE lengthens and fresh historical analyses are written, it becomes ever clearer that the two decades falling between the abortive revolutions of 1848 and the surrender of Paris in 1871 constitute what may be called the "great divide" or watershed of the history of the nineteenth century. It will not do to say merely that this was a period of transition (since that meaningless saying may be made of any period); rather was it a period of momentous crisis cutting deep to the roots of European life. In these years the ebbing tide of earlier major waves of thought and striving met and was caught up with new major waves, which broke upon the shore and left there a greatly altered configuration. Before this time one saw the Europe of romantic liberalism, of the Utopian socialists, of Mazzini and Lamennais, of Hegel and the idealists, of the pre-railroad economy, of the powers acting in concert and with some lingering allegiance to a common political civilization; the Europe that came after was the Europe of *Realpolitik*, of Bismarck and the Prussian hegemony, of Marx and materialism, of the *Kulturkampf* and strident anticlericalism, of naturalism, of "science", of Darwinism, of high capitalism, of the armed peace and near-eclipse of the European allegiance. The history that links together these two deeply different stages of European life and reveals how the earlier was transformed to become the latter is set forth in Robert C.

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* REALISM AND NATIONALISM, 1852-1871 *by Robert C. Binkley* (HARPERS. 337 pp. $3.75).

Binkley's new volume in the Harper's *Rise of Modern Europe* series, edited by W. L. Langer. It is the first comprehensive political and cultural treatment that has yet been done of the period, considered as a whole and as an era in the life of Europe rather than of the several nations of Europe.

In pattern, in organic structure, in analytical character, this is an almost wholly admirable piece of work, but what will, I think, impress itself most forcibly on readers of the volume is the multiplicity of fresh views that it contains. These were certain to be the reward for any historian bold enough to emancipate himself from uncritical acceptance of the liberal-nationalist account of the last century, and this Professor Binkley has successfully done; with the result that he has been able to see many forgotten things and to discern many important contrasts which have been all but absent from our conventional picture of the nineteenth century. Thus we get here, for example, the shrewd recognition that the Bismarck saga is a Prussian, not a German epic, that the *Reichsgründung* did not unite but divided Germany – did hard violence indeed to the living growth of German nationality; rather was it Austria who in this period, with her defense of European confederate polity, was champion of that growth. Professor Binkley wisely understands that you can get a better view of Europe from Vienna than from Berlin. Again, in surveying the great events south of the Alps, Binkley sees and enables us rather refreshingly to see the carpet-bagger character of the Piedmontese "unification" of Italy, with all the crude violence that Cavour and his anti-Catholic allies did to Italian national life.

Piedmont, like Prussia, grew great by alliance with a sect rather than a nation.

In his account of the culture of this period Professor Binkley displays equally well his gift for fresh analytical penetration and independence of judgement. That is why he can deftly pair Mill and Marx together, showing the affinity between classical economics and Marxian socialist theory because they "shared the same fundamental concept of human nature". It is the reason, too, for his recognition of the very small debt which the new technology owed to science, and of that most certain sign of spiritual decline: the decadent romanticism of hero-worship. The first six chapters of the book have to do with the totality of European culture, and there is no denying that they reveal Binkley as a genuinely philosophic historian, comprehensive in his survey, rational in his order, discerning in his insight and judgement.

No fair-minded reviewer could wish to scold so ably written a book, and were this a less meritorious piece of work I should not think it worth while to say what I now will say in complaint against a certain inadequacy in its analysis. The author is, as I have indicated, a historian who is not content to narrate, but seeks also to explain, to go below the surface of events even to showing them as symbolic of organic uniformities; and this is precisely the reason why one might have expected that in dealing with what he calls so well the "schism in civilization" he would dig hard after the reasons why the "secular dogmas" triumphed so completely over the Christian religious tradition. How came it to be so? Wherein was that tradition so weak, or so weakly defended?

These questions touch what Professor Binkley sees, dimly at least, to be at the root of all his chief problems, but he does not answer them. Albert Leon Guérard came nearer to doing so in his *French Prophets of Yesterday*, a work which, curiously enough, escapes mention in Binkley's bibliography.

More probing for these answers would, I believe, have enabled Binkley to be even more thorough than he is in explaining his central thesis for the political history of this age, namely, the collapse of that federative polity exemplified in the Concert of Europe, Austria before 1867, the Italian state system before 1860, and the old Germanic Confederation. That European order went down in the fifties and sixties, and, as Professor Binkley recognizes clearly, this was not because centralized bureaucracy, the sovereign absolute state, and the Piedmont-Prussia fashion in political action were overwhelmingly strong or embedded somehow in an organic logic of history, but because genuine European conservatism was weak. Now why was that so? Had Binkley found and given the answer here he would not only have written a more fundamental study, but he would probably have avoided the only glaringly wrong interpretation with which he can be charged. I refer to his representation of the action of the Vatican Council as analogous to and of a piece with the general movement towards centralization and absolutism. There was to be sure some partial analogy here, but the really significant fact was that the Council, in affirming anew the unity of Catholicism and the supreme papal authority, turned the face of the Church more sternly than ever against the forces that triumphed in this age. It was not the loose, "federalist" Church of Döllinger, Acton, and the remnant party of Liberal Catholicism, but the papal Church of Ultramontanism that fought the rear-guard action for Europe and for federative polity against *Realpolitik* and bureaucratic absolutism. Professor Binkley has not quite seen the Europe that appeared to the eyes of Louis Veuillot, that bashi-bazouk of the Holy See. Had he seen it he would have also seen the only big things that have escaped him.

ROSS J. S. HOFFMAN

Modern Writers and Beliefs*

THE youngest generation of poets in England acknowledges three leaders of its own age, who are also acclaimed by older critics: W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, and C. Day Lewis. They are recognized not only for their poetic talent but also for their political affiliations – which, though not officially, are with the Marxian camp. Poets, of course, have always been political persons, from Dryden onwards, and though political issues may do little to form posterity's judgement of them, certainly their impact on their time cannot be divorced from such issues. More than of any age, this is true of ours, when the world is drawn up into various political ranks of light and darkness whose members think in terms of absolutes, however little some of them recognize it. And even the poet who says he secretes his song as the oyster does the pearl has taken a side.

*THE DESTRUCTIVE ELEMENT *by Stephen Spender* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. 284 pp. $2.00).

Mr. Spender is well aware of this. Fiction and verse, he says, in his first book of criticism, have a "political-moral subject", and that he attempts no divorce between politics and morals bespeaks an insight which unfortunately his poetry has not always manifested. However, the moral question in contemporary literature he sees as one of unbelief rather than beliefs; that is, the modern writer is faced not so much with the difficulty of choosing amongst a number of contrary beliefs as with the difficulty of escaping complete scepticism. Since he aims to make explicit no creed of his own, Mr. Spender occupies a position which is far from favorable to his argument for the need of belief. "This book is not written in defence of any particular set of beliefs, because I myself have adopted them. What interests me here is what writers write about, the subjects of literature today." There, of course, is an echo of the "scientific" attitude which finds its chief exponent in I. A. Richards, and which is, *per se*, inapplicable to literature, because literature deals in human actions and these are matters of value. If beliefs all stand on an equal footing and derive their value from their being merely a necessary basis of successful literary production, there is little in them to attract the sort of minds which should produce literature.

That is not finally Mr. Spender's position, but it does color his thought and account for a certain vagueness in his work: the vagueness that always marks the modern pragmatic temper, never quite admitting that it is faced by a wall difficult to surmount or one against which its back is thrust, and in the end, not really sure the wall is there! Still Mr. Spender walks boldly into one enemy's camp and seeks to prove that the classic inhabitant of the ivory tower himself, Henry James, was not beyond moral concerns. He gives over almost a third of his book to discussing James; a good deal of this discussion deals with matters of James's craftsmanship (a subject which will ever be a delight to the professional writer) and some of it merely aims to retail the peculiar flavor of a writer more honored than read. With those who find James tiresome, dessicated, and a snob, Mr. Spender will not agree; for him James is "a great writer who developed an inner world of his own through his art".

"In the destructive element immerse. That is the way," Mr. Spender quotes Joseph Conrad as saying. Whether or not James immersed himself is not clear; at least, in Mr. Spender's interpretation, he seems to have been well aware of the destructive element and to have met its dangers in his peculiar way. What our critic maintains is that James sought to show, and perhaps to find, through his novels how the good life might be lived in a world that was decadent and, so far as it held beliefs, held beliefs to which no sensitive mind could subscribe. What James "cared for was civilization", says Mr. Spender, but to save his civilized creatures from destruction he had to build them a sort of fictional game preserve. James was concerned with human happiness resulting from right action (in which were included thought and feeling), and that was a moral concern; but his morals were not of this world.

William Butler Yeats is next considered. His "poetry is devoid of any unifying moral subject, and it develops in a perpetual search for one". But though his "contemporary awareness" shows Mr. Yeats the need of a philosophy, his "thought is hopelessly inadequate to his situation", and he is driven to take refuge from the modern world – from meeting his moral problem, that is – in magic, then in the ideas of "breeding and courtesy". His poetry is of "a world of legend which, although it has no moral and no religion, provides authentically a personal vision of life".

In his "Introduction" Mr. Spender says "having a particular moral or political axe to grind does destroy art if the writer (*a*) suspends his own judgements and substitutes the system of judging established by a political creed; (*b*) assumes a knowledge of men and the future course of history, which he may passionately believe, but which, as an artist, he simply hasn't got". When he comes to examine T. S. Eliot, Mr. Eliot's axe-grinding is found to have worked more harm on his criticism than on his poetry. The explanation of this seems to lie in the fact that in his poetry Mr. Eliot has immersed himself in the destructive element, while in his criticism he has come out on the other side, which is not on the sublunary sphere. It is true that Mr. Eliot's later poetry seems also to be on this other side, "divested of the love of created things", but in verse it produces effects comparable to the last quartets of Beethoven – in criticism it produces a snobbish desire to put William Blake and D. H. Lawrence in their places. His belief is in a traditionalism which "provides us with no critical standards which we can apply to writers who are not orthodox Christians, in the sense in which he understands the word Christianity".

Here the grounds of Mr. Spender's disapproval are clearer than in the cases of James and Mr. Yeats; the very personal nature of their retreats leaves the issue, on their sides, somewhat beclouded; but Mr. Eliot has met the moral problem by open allegiance to Christianity and the values traditionally associated with it. But Christianity cannot be a way out (or a way *in*) in Mr. Spender's estimation, for in Mr. Eliot's case it has led him to reject writers of genius such as William Blake and D. H. Lawrence, whose work is art, and art "does not illustrate a point of view, it does not illustrate at all, it presents its subject in a new form". Art he will not have entirely autonomous ("the poet is not dealing in purely aesthetic values, but . . . is communicating an experience of life which is outside of his own personal experience"), yet it appears to be art alone which justifies the values of an artist's work.

D. H. Lawrence is found to bear grave defects both as an artist and a person, but the importance of Lawrence is as "a revolutionary and a preacher":

> . . . He insisted on real and living values: real life, real sexual experience, real death. All *ideas* of love and honor would be sacrificed to these realities. This is revolutionary, because it is clear that if human beings insist on having lives with these values, they cannot accept society as it now is.

Despite this, his message is weakened by his "poetic gift of multiple personality", which "enabled him to escape from his real subject, which was modern civilization". Such poetic sympathy, however, he might have outgrown had he lived, and this Mr. Spender finds indicated in some remarks of Lawrence's which are so significant (in relation to Mr. Spender's thought) they call for quotation:

> Somehow that which is psychic – non-human in humanity is more interesting to me than the old-fashioned human element, which causes one to conceive a character in a certain moral scheme and make him consistent. . . . When Marinetti writes: ". . . The heat of a piece of wood or iron is, in fact, more passionate, for us, than the laughter or tears of a woman" – then I know what he means. . . . Because what is interesting in the laugh of the woman is the same as the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat: it is the inhuman will, call it physiology, or . . . physiology of matter, that fascinates me. . . .

The interest spoken of in the above passage is certainly in the individual; but it is not the human individual of James or Yeats or Eliot: it is the individual of whatever kind the molecule may be. "The old question of free will, of whether the individual is free to choose between two courses of action, becomes superseded by another question: Is a society able to determine the course of its history?" The individual is like the molecule; society is like the bar of steel: what happens to both when the heat is applied? That is Mr. Spender's moral question.

It all ends in a very simple reduction. The artist can no longer legitimately be concerned with his personal salvation or with personal values: the class struggle is his subject, comrades! That Mr. Spender, who *New Masses* says "belongs only to a decaying class", should indorse this insane Marxian dogmatism may not surprise those who have read such poems of his as "The Funeral", but in the present book it lies concealed under sustained obliquity of approach (which is again disguised under the simple appearance of slang and tabulation). The mere recognition of the class struggle in fiction and poetry is not enough to gain Mr. Spender's approval, and he looks with favor on a novel by a South African, Laurens van der Post, who suggests that people might better be human before being Communist. Yet his marks of highest merit go to Edward Upward – the author of two stories so boy-scout Communist in tone and thought as to be funny in the intervals of one's pity for their mental atrophy – and his fellow-poet Hugh Wystan Auden – who has contrived to get Marxism and psychoanalysis to live together in unholy alliance in Middle English metric and modern obscurity.

The Destructive Element is an interesting book, combining a number of acute insights with a fundamental obtuseness. Its underlying thesis is one which has in the large proved attractive to persons who are alien to the literature it treats of and, existing of necessity on the periphery of the society whose older traditions have nourished that literature, would naturally destroy the values it embodies; here one may see how subtly it has insinuated itself into the thought of a man whose best poem begins:

I think continually of those who were truly great.
Who, from the womb, remembered the soul's history. . . .

It is not, in my opinion, a great poem; but what is good in it points to the road Mr. Spender has not taken.

GEOFFREY STONE